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THE
AWAKENING
OF THE
DUCHESS



FRANCES CHARLES

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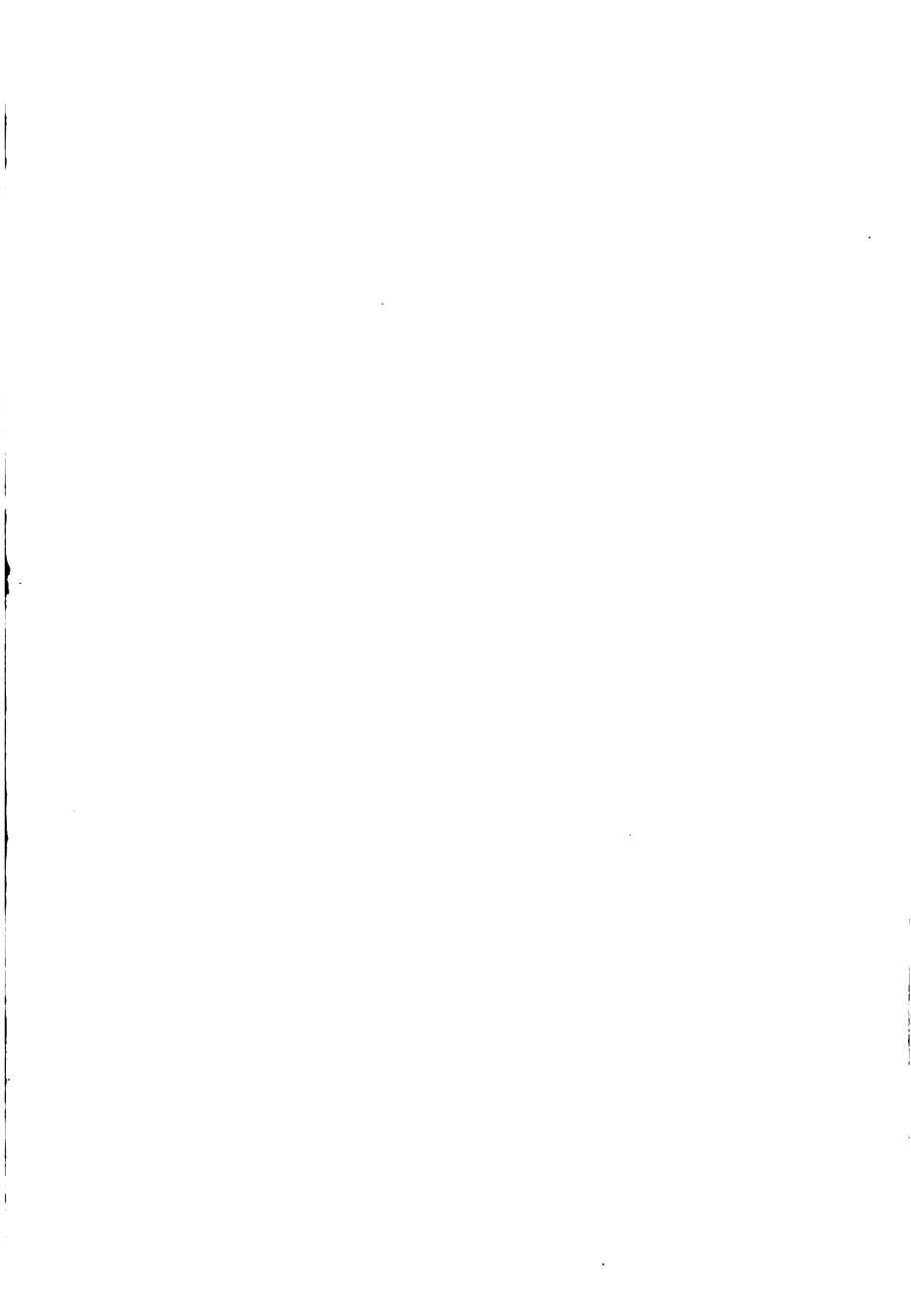
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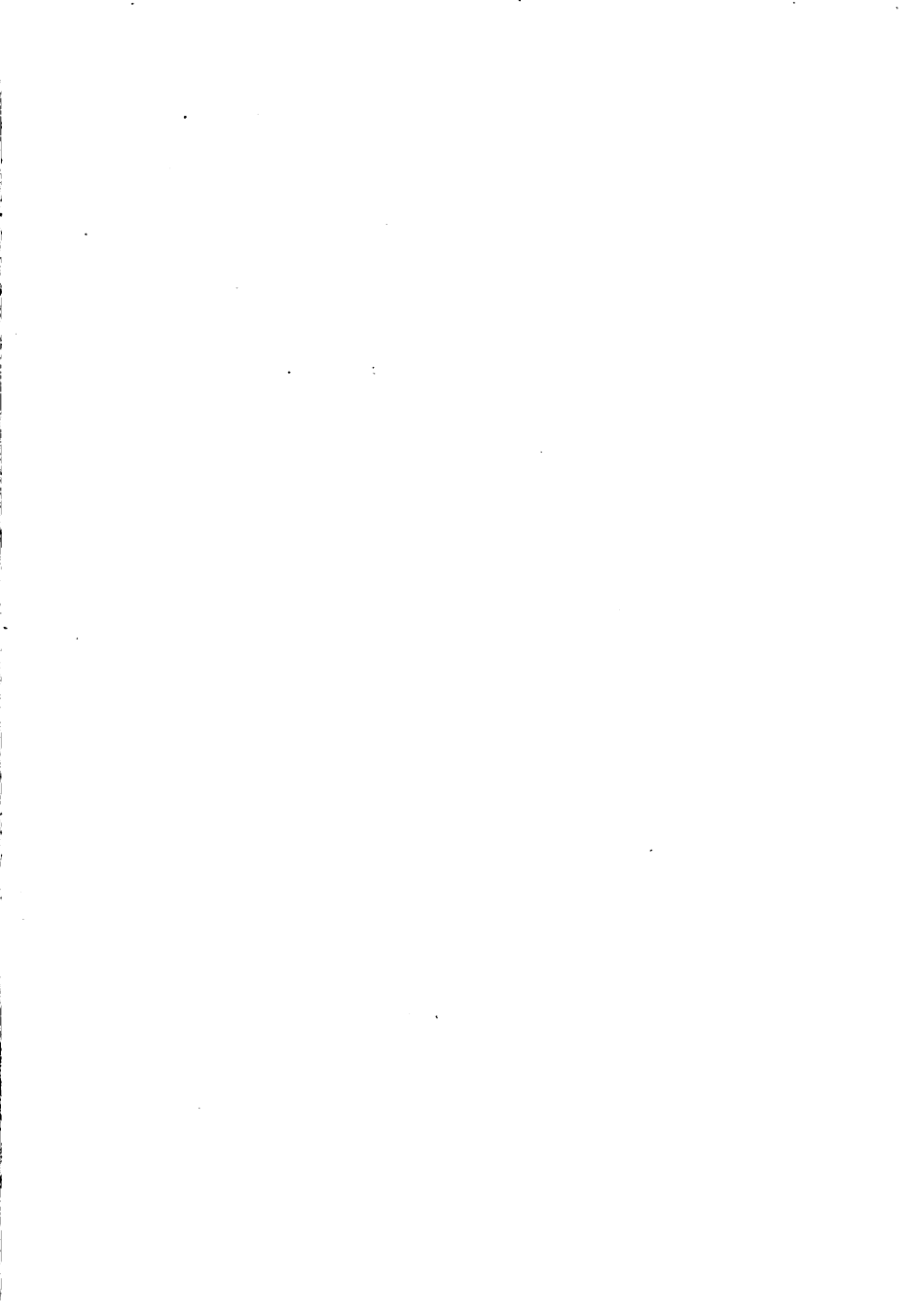
The Awakening of the Duchess

FRANCES CHARLES'
WORKS

IN THE COUNTRY GOD FORGOT

THE SIEGE OF YOUTH

THE AWAKENING OF THE DUCHESS





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The Awakening of the Duchess

By
Frances Charles

Author of

“In the Country God Forgot,” “The Siege of Youth”

Illustrated by I. H. Caliga

Boston
Little, Brown, and Company
1903

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To my Niece

RUTH

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Illustrations

From Pastel Drawings by I. H. Caliga

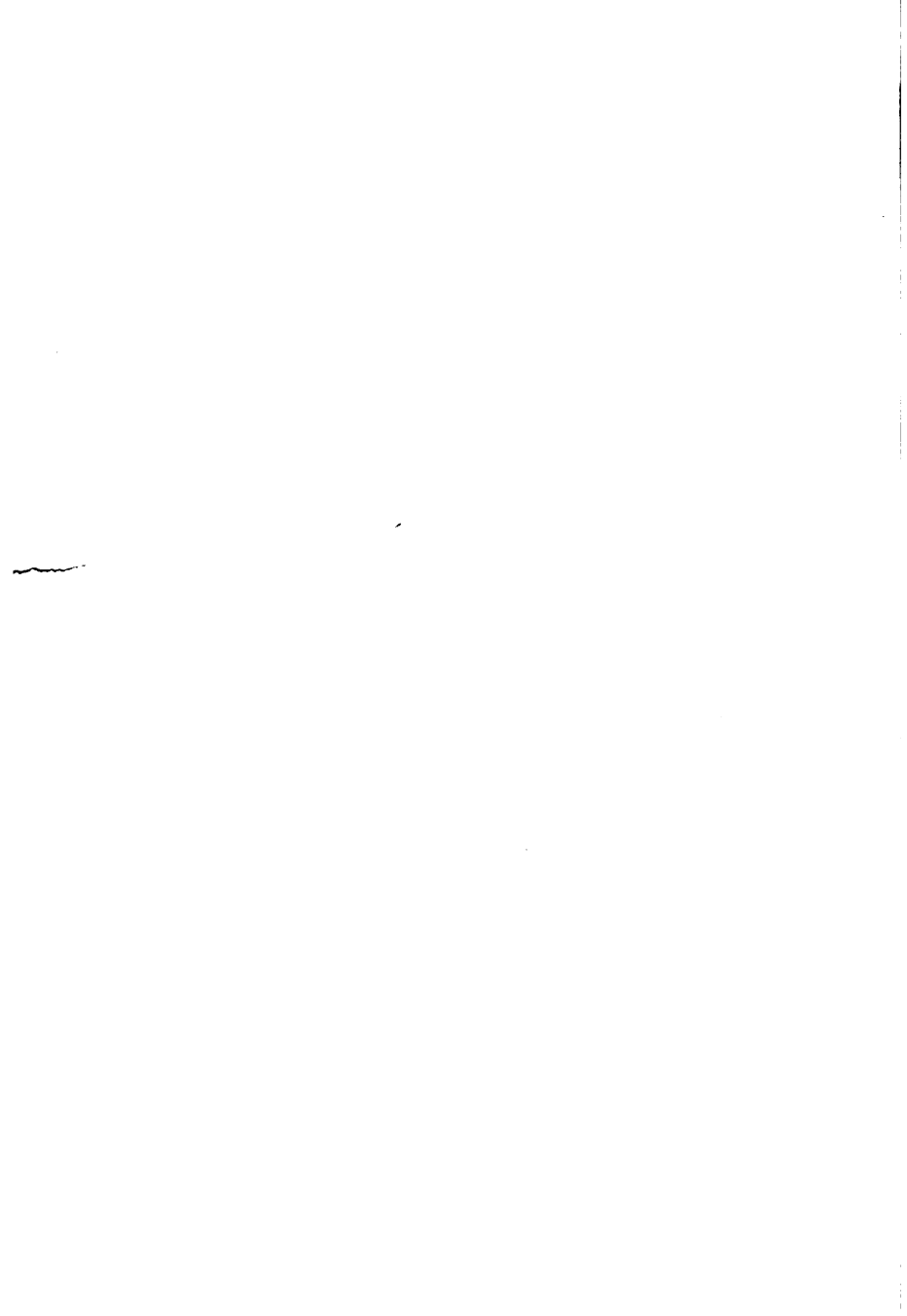
“ ‘If you want an old-fashioned prescription,
you will find it at home and not at the
theatre’ ” *Frontispiece*

“ ‘The Duchess kissed Roselle over the polished
railing’ ” *Page 106*

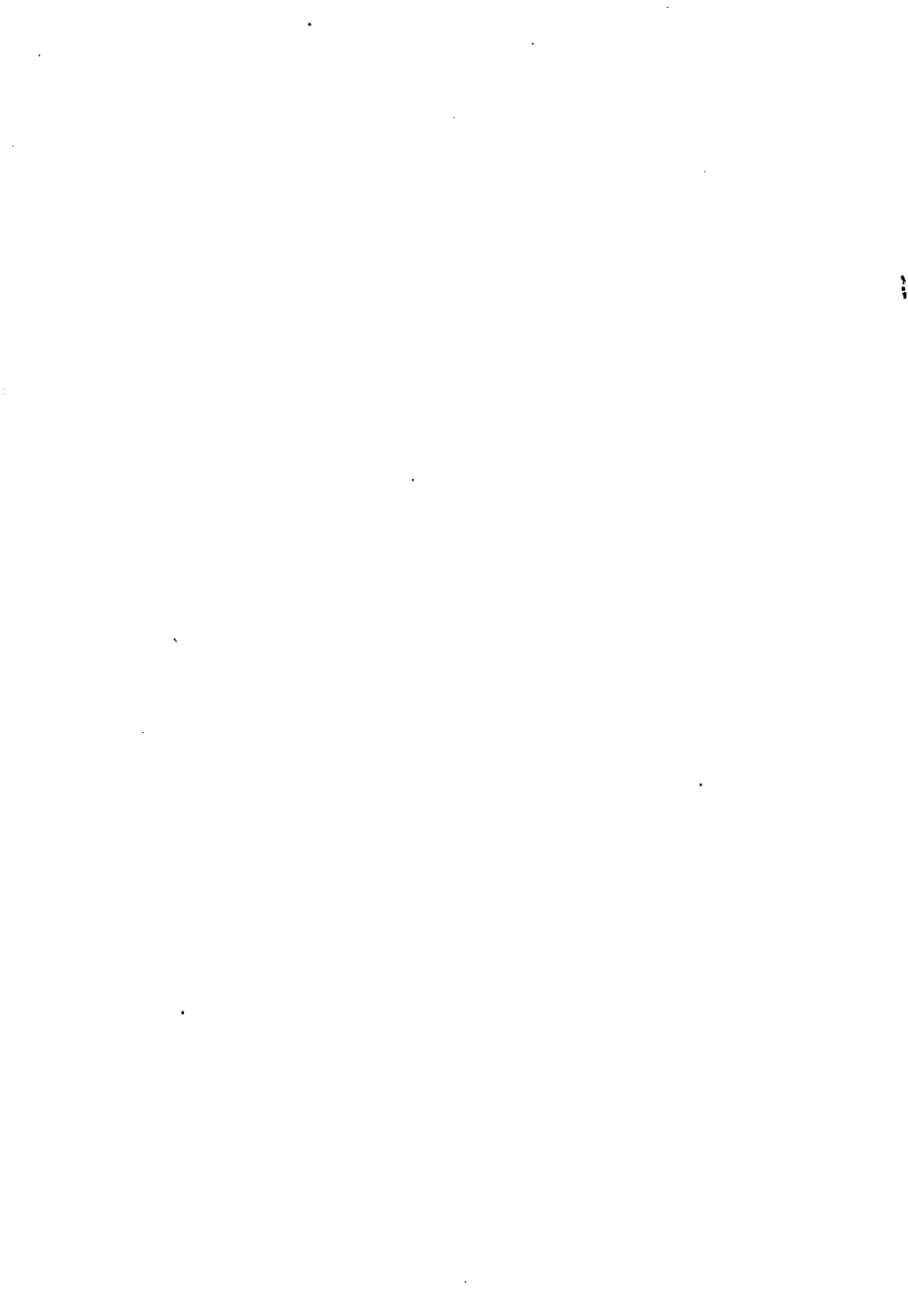
“ ‘Then the Duchess went over to Roselle’s
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Color Plates engraved by John Andrew & Son



THE AWAKENING
of THE DUCHESS



THE AWAKENING *of* THE DUCHESS

I

THE DUCHESS

ROSELLE was a little girl about eight years old when this story opens. She was a very lonely little girl and only had one person to whom she cared to talk, and this was Aramanth.

It is very sad to have a mother and care more for one's Irish nurse, for Aramanth was an Irish nurse who wore French caps and clean, glossy white aprons.

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"You are very rich," Aramanth used to tell her little charge. "Your ma is very rich, Miss Rosie, and in all the City no one has a nicer house than this," — the one that Roselle lived in.

Now this is very nice, is it not? Just think of it. Roselle was a little girl, only eight years old on a day near Christmas. She lived with her "ma," which was what Aramanth called mamma, or mother, and this beautiful lady (for Roselle's mother was beautiful) owned one of the nicest houses in San Francisco.

It really was a beautiful house. It was made of rich brownish-looking stone and had rich brownish-looking lions standing guard at every gate, especially the great gate before the sweeping driveway. It may sound foolish to say that these were rich-

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looking lions, but they really were. They were great, sober-faced brutes, so great and so sober that any one who passed the gates must have been glad that they were brown stone lions and not real ones, such as growl and bite.

Roselle did not see much of the house except the two rooms in which she and Aramanth lived. Her life was very simple, one day being very much like the day that went before it, and very much like the one that came after.

This surprises you? Well, it did me at first also, as we used to read that the rich princesses in fairy stories lived very wonderfully and in continual excitement, so I used to imagine (and perhaps you did too) that rich children lived like these princesses, with all the good things to see and eat passing be-

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fore them like a panorama the moment breakfast was done. And I used to think that rich children ate their breakfast off gold dishes, and all such things, but how mistaken I was!

Aramanth would awaken Roselle at seven every morning, and often when Aramanth looked very tired, little Roselle would say simply: "If you care to take ten more winks, Aramanth, I will dress myself."

Often she did, buttoning everything as correctly as if her ma kept the little shop at the corner and had to teach all her little children to help one another and to help themselves.

(Aramanth called ten more winks taking a little sleep before the nice warm fire.)

Then Roselle would take her breakfast of mush and bread and milk out of

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a little china bowl, just as we did when children, but she would always eat alone, quite alone in her own big nursery.

There was a small table there, and Aramanth would bring the tray from the kitchen, and place table and all near the fire in winter or near the window in summer, so it was very pleasant for the little girl. It was a very plain room compared to the gilt palace that we used to think rich children occupied, but it was very fine in its way also. It was furnished in rattan, and had pale blue walls, hung with pretty cheerful children's pictures. There were comfortable chairs and a long looking-glass and clean pretty curtains, toys and books and all sorts of things to make a little girl happy.

After breakfast, Roselle would take a walk with Aramanth if it were good

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weather. For eight years Aramanth had taken her out, only at first she had carried her clad in long clothes and a tiny silken bonnet that just fitted Roselle's big doll now. The second year Aramanth had wheeled her in her small carriage, a very big-eyed, solemn little creature in short dresses who seldom cried, but after this little Roselle used to walk beside her quietly. She and Aramanth had walked for six years now, side by side.

After this walk, came lesson time for a few hours and then luncheon all by herself on the little table, and after this there was a long afternoon. Sometimes Roselle took a music lesson from a tall quiet young lady who never said a word to her, because she thought that children were not capable of understanding such things as grown

THE DUCHESS

people say to one another. The one thing which little Roselle liked best of all was to stare out of her great wide window during the long afternoon. She could see the street and the clean stone sidewalk and many other things, and sometimes just when she least expected it to happen, a fine carriage would drive up to the great stoop and stop there. There would be a fine man too, in a tall hat and tight pantaloons, who sat up on the high seat holding the pretty reins, and there was another man who sat next to him, like a statue, until the prancing horses stopped. Then even before Roselle could see quite how he slipped down from his high seat to do it, this second man would be opening the carriage door. And out would step the beautiful Duchess, looking very beautiful,

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very girlish, in the warm golden light of the afternoon.

That was Roselle's mother, and of course she was not a duchess at all, because there are none in San Francisco, but it seemed the most beautiful name that Roselle could give this beautiful woman — except one. Can you guess it?

II

ROSELLE HERSELF

AFTER supper, which was always just at five o'clock, Roselle would sit and talk to Aramanth until seven.

She always had a very simple supper, just as the baker's child did, perhaps bread and milk and jam, or once in a while some simple pudding sent up from the Duchess's dinner, only the Duchess never sent it. It was always Cross Cook. "Take it up to the Lambie," she would say to Aramanth just when Aramanth thought she was the crossest, so maybe she did not mean her scolding half the time.

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After Roselle had finished her supper, Aramanth told her stories until seven o'clock, and then of course, as all little children know, it is bedtime.

Aramanth knew a great many stories, especially of poor children, and Roselle never tired of them. She thought that poor children were the most interesting things on earth, and she used to tell Aramanth so every evening. Aramanth was delighted too, because her knowledge of rich children was very slight, and she could not have told anything else. In fact, she only knew one story about one rich person, and that was a rich baby, so it was well that Roselle liked the poor children. In fact, the rich baby was Roselle herself. I think I shall tell the story just as Aramanth did in the evenings, because, strange as you may think it, the poor children's

ROSELLE HERSELF

story joined the rich baby's story at one part of it, and was very interesting. In fact, one ran right into the other and told how Aramanth became a French nurse instead of a dear, round-faced little Irish girl.

This is the story : —

“Once there was a great many poor children who all lived in a house together —”

“Was it a big house?” Roselle would ask.

“No, the teentiest, weentiest little house,” Aramanth would always answer, “so little that you could almost get it in this room. There was a door, but not many windows, and only three rooms, so when the mother was humming in the kitchen, you could hear it in the place where the parlor ought to be.”

THE AWAKENING OF THE DUCHESS

The little heiress would move closer to Aramanth's starched apron. "What did the mother sing, Aramanth?" Aramanth had a nice loud voice, and every evening she would sing for the child. Often it was only something like this: —

" ' Little Robin Red Breast sitting on the tree,
He's singing to you, he's singing to me,
Oh, what does he say, little girl, little boy?
The world's brimming over with joy.' "

That is a nice jolly song for a dear poor woman in a teenty, weenty little house to sing, is it not, children? Roselle could almost see her in that tiny kitchen rubbing a fine big iron along a long narrow board that had a child's apron on it.

" Oh, wasn't it nice? " she would say to Aramanth, — bless her, never the least bit jealous. " Was n't it nice? "

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Of course the Duchess never sang songs like that, because she was very rich and never thought of singing, unless she stood in her big parlor under ever so many beautiful lights, and some one played to her song on a big piano.

"Yes, it used to be," Aramanth replied, clearing her throat as if she remembered it all very well, but the remembrance made her feel rather queer.

"Yes it used to be sweet and nice and brave of her, because all the children had to be clothed and fed and bathed and kept happy, when the days were dark" (Roselle grew to know that this did not mean days when the weather was bad or rainy, but days when there was very little food on the poor table for all the poor children to eat).

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“ Well,” Aramanth would continue, “ there came very dark days one time ; the father had died, and left them no money, and then they were all like little birds, with their mouths open often. Yet all these sad times the good mother would smile and smile at them, and sometimes when they sat down to dinner, just a very little dinner, all she ever had to say was never any crosser than this ” (only Aramanth put the brogue in it, just as the good Irish mother must have done also) : “ ‘ Shure, let ’s all play we are great people this evening, with too fine manners to notice that the dishes bay n’t full, — or let ’s all play for supper that this loaf of bread is two times bigger than it be ! ’ ”

Bless that poor woman !

Roselle had been sitting with both hands clasped and her big eyes wide

ROSELLE HERSELF

open, but here she would give a little clap.

“O Aramanth! and did they all sit around and play it? What fun!”

“Yes, they all sat around and played it.”

I suppose I might as well tell the story myself, and save Aramanth the trouble. Indeed, Roselle knew it every word; and there was not a doubt but that if Aramanth became hoarse some evening, Roselle could have told the whole story for her, just as if she had been there too, but as Aramanth never was hoarse and always seemed to like it, she told it every night.

She said that they all sat around and played these games at the empty table, and once when the baby cried and said he could n't *see* the pieces he was making believe belonged to him, why,

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did n't all the others cut off tiny portions while his face was all screwed up with tears, so when he opened his silly little eyes again, there were the pieces for him, right beside his plate !

Bless these poor children, too ! It shows how brave hearts make kind hearts, and how kind hearts can feed a hungry little stomach and not mind it at all, at all.

Roselle knew every name also. There were Mollie and Tommy and Mikie and Mickey and Annie, and ever so many more, and the reason Mikie was named Mikie and Mickey all but named Mikie's very name, was this : Mikie had been named after his father, who was called Michael, but he did not look like him in the least. Still this would not have mattered, if Mickey had not come along with the very, very look

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of his daddy, so what was to be done but call them both Michael with different nicknames, Mikie and Mickey, which was a very nice way out of it, I think.

Well, I must now go on with Aramanth's story, or let her go on with it, as she tells this part very well indeed. "It was winter, and things was bad," said Aramanth, — Aramanth did not always use the best grammar.

"Food was high and the children needed more clothes, and the very oldest girl and the poor mother grew ter'ble unhappy after a bit."

"In stories," Roselle broke in quickly, "some kind old man or some good little children or some nice young lady would have come to them just then."

Aramanth sat looking straight before her.

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“None came,” she said; “but one night when they were half starving, who should walk in but Cross Cook!”

“Cross Cook, — our Cross Cook, — dear Cross Cook!” cried the little girl, in great excitement. She always loved this part of Aramanth’s poor people’s story. It was so different from other people’s stories to have a fat cross cook appear to rescue a poor family.

“She was red and her face was hot, too,” Aramanth went on, rather excited also, “and she was out of breath from walking, at least the poor family thought it was from walking, but it turned out differently, after all. She was out of breath from lugging a great big basket. The poor woman invited her in, and in she came, bringing the basket with her, and down she sat on a stiff chair with her two feet barely touching the floor.”

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Roselle could almost see her.

Cross Cook was rather short, you know, and she must have sat on the very edge of the chair with her little black bonnet over one ear, just the same little black bonnet made out of black rusty lace and crumpled ribbons.

And beside this bonnet over her left ear, did not Cross Cook always wear a scowl in the middle of her forehead, as if she were the most ferocious person alive outside a pirate!

Cross Cook began to speak : —

“There are some things in that basket you can have,” she said to the poor woman, in the crossest tone, too, such as she always used when she was nicest.

The poor woman put her apron to her eyes.

THE AWAKENING OF THE DUCHESS

"Oh, how good you are, how good you are!" cried the poor mother, smelling some warm nice food in Cross Cook's basket.

Cross Cook scowled more, which is the only way I know of expressing her answer.

"How dare you tell me that I am good!" she cried, her face getting redder and redder. "How dare you tell me I am good! Katie Annie Duffy, did n't I know ye when ye were a little girl, and did n't we like each other, and had I ever been alone and friendless would n't you and Mike ha' been the first ones to come to me! But it's of no paltry food that I come to tell ye of, Katie Annie; it's of the young Mistress up at the big house where I am working. They have been in heaps of trouble there, or I might

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'a' come to look you all up before this. But last week old Master died, just three days to the very hour after a sweet little daughter came to him and the young Mistress. He was always so kind to young Mistress that she is near heart-broken, that pretty and helpless a critter as she is!"

"O poor, poor woman!" cried the poor mother. "O poor poor little daughter! I know how it is losing Mike, you see!" and never had her eyes looked so sweet to the poor children, as when she stood there, sympathizing with that rich, sad young woman who had just lost the kind father of her little child.

"I went up into the big room next to Madam's to see the baby," Cross Cook continued, "and there she lay in a lace crib with her little fists

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doubled up and her eyes closed just like other babies, for all that her hands could be filled with gold if they wasn't so weak and little, and her eyes could have looked on the finest sights, if they would but open ! ”

The Cross Cook looked at the poor mother. She did not know what to make of it, but the poor mother's having had all the poor babies made her understand. “ God makes us all the same,” she said. It was a very simple statement, but it seemed to explain somehow.

“ Well, what I come to say,” Cross Cook went on, “ was about what young Mistress said to me. As I tip-toed through her room, what happened, but her eyes opened.

“ ‘ Cook ! ’ she said to me, — ‘ Cook ! I want a good girl to come and be

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nurse to my little daughter. I want her to start in life with some good girl who is fond of children and willing to grow up with my little Roselle !' [Can't you begin to see how this story is going ?]

"Then I thought of your Aramanth," Cross Cook said. "The minute I looked on that little helpless baby in her big, rich cradle something had come into my heart for her, and I felt sorry all at once ; and then when young Mistress spoke that way to me, I thought of your family and of how you all loved each other, and of how it would be nice if Aramanth would take charge of young Mistress's baby girl."

Cross Cook looked at poor mother to see what she would answer, while the poor mother went over to her eldest daughter (of course you have

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found out now that this was our Aramanth).

She put her arm around the young daughter's shoulder: "I hate to have ye go out into the world, my darlint, I hate to have ye go out into the world, but we need the money for one thing."

"Oh, I know, mother, I know," Aramanth cried.

"And then for another,—you'll go there, darlint, as if the poor little lass was our Mickey, trying to love her just the same—"

The poor girl put her arms around the poor woman, and the poor woman enfolded the poor girl in hers of a sudden, and there were tears on both faces.

"I love you, you have been so good to us all, Mammy," the poor girl said softly.

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"Will ye pass any little thing I have did?" said the poor mother.

"Will ye not be kinder, dearie dear, to any one poorer than we are, poorer in love or kindness, as well as money. Money is not all, dearie dear."

Of course the poor girl said "yes."

A few days later they took Aramanth up to the grand house to see the rich baby. It was her christening day. She had on a great long dress, so that when a grown person held her, the dress fell clear down to the polished floor, but for all her dress was so rich and so heavy, the little tiny baby slept on with her eyes closed and her hands folded, just as Mickey had done, when they took him to the priest one Sunday.

Cross Cook gave Aramanth a nice cap and an apron, and Aramanth carried Roselle down to the parlor, where a

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great bishop stood in his white robe, and there were several other people also, all in light silken clothes; and last of all was the young mother, clad in black and still very weak, very sick-looking also from her grief.

Aramanth carried the rich baby very carefully, and after her came all the servants. Cross Cook was there, and a girl who helped Cross Cook in the kitchen, and three housemaids, and the coachman, and footman, and two bashful gardeners with big hands, who kept the great yard around the stone house tidy.

Now, when Aramanth reached the centre of the room, she did not know how much further to carry the sleeping baby, so she stood right there, while the big Bishop also stood staring, and one or two of the ladies cleared their

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throats. It was then, too, that the Duchess shed human tears. She had on a rich black dress that fell all round her pretty figure, and her face was pale and her brown hair curly, so the servants always remembered how handsome their mistress looked at Roselle's baptism.

But it was what she did that was still more lovely, for as her little baby lay in its nurse's arms under the chandelier in that big rich parlor, the Duchess went forward swiftly, the tears running down her face, and then suddenly without a word of warning, she dropped onto her knees and seemed to pray; and as she knelt there, looking so tender and pretty, Aramant laid the little rich baby in its mother's arms, because of her mother's loving Mickey, and liking to

THE AWAKENING OF THE DUCHESS

cuddle him after she was left without Papa Mike.

Then everybody else prayed also; perhaps they merely said, "God watch over this little baby," just as they would have said over a rich or poor, or red or black little creature who lay in its mother's arms, without an earthly father.

After this prayer, the big Bishop had asked the name of the baby, and one of the pretty ladies in a light silken dress took the little girl in her arms for a moment, and said, "Her name is to be Roselle!"

So they baptized the little rich girl Roselle, and that night when Aramanth sat in the nursery holding her before the fire, who should walk in but the Duchess.

She was a very young-looking woman indeed, with a tall slender figure, and a

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girlish face, and a very proud, pretty mouth as a rule, but just to-night it was only pretty.

“So you are the new nurse girl,” she said to Aramanth kindly. “I am very glad to meet you, my dear, and I want you to be good to my little daughter.”

“Oh, I shall be,” Aramanth could not help saying quickly, and then she was afraid she had said it too quickly, but the Duchess seemed pleased.

“Cook has told me all about you, Aramanth — that is your name, my girl, is it not? and I am quite sure we can trust you. Now, to-day every one was giving my little daughter presents, so I thought I should like to give you one, too, because you carried her so nicely; but I knew you would like it better if I came up here to do it, where just you and I were alone.”

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She opened her hand, and a small purse was in it.

“There is money in here for a new dress, my dear; do not thank me for it. It is only twenty dollars;” and the Duchess really seemed a bit bashful over her own present, as she stopped in her pretty manner and laid the purse on Roselle’s long dress. Seeing it there, she laughed a little.

“Look, Aramanth!” she said; “the baby is giving it to you. I hope she will always be a good friend to you.”

And then, in her sweet girlish way, she reached down and took Aramanth’s small red hand in her slim fingers and shook it a little before she left the room.

After she left the room, what do you think that funny young Duchess did? for she was young to be any-

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body's mother, and she liked things that young people liked, although she did not have many young people around her.

She went into her own room and rang the bell that went down into the kitchen, and after a few minutes up came Cross Cook.

"Cook!" the Duchess said, "I like the appearance of the new nurse girl very much, and I just gave her money to buy a dress, because it is a very happy day, you know, Cook, and — and I rather want to know the *color* of the dress she will buy with it?"

Cross Cook smiled, because the Duchess looked so pretty, leaning forward and smiling a little, although she had something like a lonely look in her eyes!

THE AWAKENING OF THE DUCHESS

“Oh, I’ll tell ye, ma’am,” Cross Cook said in her hearty voice. “Just as soon as I see Aramanth in a new dress, I’ll come up and tell ye, trust me for that,” and out she went, saying to herself, —

“Poor young thing, poor young madam! it’s too bad that she has n’t the sense to know that her own little baby would feel mighty warm in her own empty arms.”

Well, the Duchess did not think of it. She was rich enough to have Aramanth to take charge of her little daughter, and it never occurred to her that the baby was her baby, and its real place was in her arms, and the thing that it needed more than gold and silver presents was just love.

Well, Cross Cook was very, very busy, and forgot about the color of

ROSELLE HERSELF

Aramanth's new dress, until one evening about four or five days later, when ting-a-ling went the Duchess's bell again.

Everybody jumped down in the kitchen, as the Duchess's bell always rather surprised them, but Cross Cook was a brave woman, and was seldom surprised at anything. She just rolled down her sleeves and started off upstairs, "without even laying off her apron," as the house girl said.

The cook did not know what the Duchess wanted of her. But when she arrived in the Duchess's room, she was very much out of breath, as she always puffed a great deal over mounting stairs, so it was just as well that she did not know what the Duchess wanted, as she could not have spoken right at once.

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“I was reading a book, Cook,” the Duchess began saying, “and it seemed dull, so I looked out the window and there was no one much passing, so that was dull too. I came back into the room and suddenly remembered that you never told me about Aramanth’s new dress. What color is it, Cook?”

Cross Cook looked solemn as could be. She had recovered now, and could talk better, only not very fast as yet, so the words sounded rather solemn, also, not at all like a joke.

“It was red, and blue, and green, and black with a little purple figure, and tan, and brown, and pepper-and-salt,” she said, and stood looking at the Duchess, not even a twinkle to her eyes.

The Duchess saw that Cook was not joking, or did not mean to be saucy to

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her, so she could not tell what to make of it.

"It was what?" she asked, out of breath herself this time.

"It was all of them colors," Cross Cook replied, standing firm as the general in an army.

"How could it have been all of those colors?" the Duchess asked, thinking perhaps that Cross Cook had gone crazy.

"It was all of them colors," Cross Cook replied.

"Oh, it could not have been," the Duchess answered, — "red, and blue, and green, and black with a little purple figure, and, and what else? How *could* it have been, Cook?"

"It could have been," Cook answered with great triumph, "because it was not one dress, but four dresses,

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and three little suits of boys' clothes, and one roast of mutton, and some sugar, and flour, and — and —”

“Oh, that will do,” said the Duchess, breaking into a funny laugh. She laughed and laughed for a long time, so long that she had to wipe her eyes after a little; and to this day, the Cross Cook was never quite sure that there were not tears as well as laughter in the Duchess's beautiful eyes.

She was very much interested in Aramant ever after, and during the first few months that little Roselle was a baby, the Duchess ran into the nursery often to see them. She seemed to enjoy it, too, until at last a fat, rich lady came into the Duchess's home one day, and sat looking at her through a pair of stylish glasses, and said, —

ROSELLE HERSELF

“Why, you are pale and very dull, my dear, you need stirring up a bit, and I am going to take you right now to an afternoon tea party. So get on a pretty gown, and imagine you are only nineteen again, instead of twenty.”

“Twenty-two; I am twenty-two,” the Duchess answered, as if she really hungered for some good times herself.

The fat, rich lady smiled and laid both plump hands on the Duchess's shoulder.

“You have nothing to keep you home,” she said. “Your good nurse will take care of your baby for you. Come with me and enjoy yourself, and be happy.”

The Duchess went toward the door, looking back at the fat, rich lady.

“Oh, I have been so dull, so dull!” she cried, and went out the door to get dressed for the party.

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Every one at the afternoon tea liked this beautiful young woman whom the fat, rich lady had with her, and lots of people asked the Duchess to other parties; but when she felt like refusing and said, "Why! I have a little baby daughter home to care for," the rich ladies all put glasses to their eyes and looked at her.

"Why, have n't you a good nurse?" they asked.

So the Duchess went to all the parties and enjoyed herself, and Roselle grew up in her nursery with kind Aramanth.

It was a very sweet little existence. She was not jealous nor mean nor selfish about never seeing the handsome Duchess, because once she said to Aramanth one evening, "Aramanth, really I think that Roselle is the very prettiest name in the world;" and

ROSELLE HERSELF

Aramanth never asked why, but just knew somehow. It was because the Duchess had thought of the name herself at her baby's baptism, when she had not looked proud and stately as every one knew her, but had knelt, holding her sleeping baby as the Holy Mother holds the Little Son.

You see, deep down in her little heart, Roselle could not feel altogether lonely, because she loved her beautiful mamma very dearly in her unselfish, silent little way.

She knew that she loved her mamma because she was always so glad that she was the baby whom the Duchess had held, and she was very, very proud of the Duchess's beauty, too.

There were times when Aramanth took her to the head of the stairs when the Duchess was all dressed for a

THE AWAKENING OF THE DUCHESS

party, and as the Duchess stood in the lovely hall, under the brilliant lights, in just such rich dresses as Cinderella's godmother gave people, Roselle would look down at her and feel glad about it all, — about the Duchess's being so very pretty, about her having such a handsome dress on, and about her standing in the lovely hall, and smiling at some friends around her.

Yet however glad Roselle was (is not this funny, my dears?), she was not quite so glad a few moments after, when she and Aramanth were alone! She and Aramanth would go back to their nursery; and perhaps Aramanth would be unbuttoning Roselle's dress, or turning down the bed, or what not, and Roselle would stand thinking, thinking; or she would sit by herself before the jolly little fire, staring at it with solemn

ROSELLE HERSELF

eyes, and all at once, without meaning to change at all, her feelings would do so ! and she would not be proud or glad a bit, but lonely, oh, so lonely ! and all the time till she fell asleep she was lonely, and then even after she fell asleep, she was lonely also, until she dreamed the whole thing over.

And there would Aramanth be holding her hand again at the top of the handsome staircase, and herself, peeping at her beautiful mother, and there would be the stately hall with its ferns and its beautiful lights and its statues, and there would be the Duchess, too, tall, smiling, her dress so pretty ! and shining jewels in her hair.

But there the likeness between the real and the dream Duchess seemed to end, for the real Duchess always swept out of the hall after this, with a big

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cloak thrown over all her fine garments; but what would the dream Duchess do?

She would stand in the hall and look all around her and then she would say to some one, —

“ Oh, where is my little daughter? I cannot go unless I kiss my little daughter good-bye!” and there she would stand with her two little hands outstretched and waiting, the long gloves reaching far above her elbows. And, still in the dream, Roselle would loose her hands from Aramanth’s kind one, and run, run, run, until she was just near enough to the Duchess to smile at her (indeed, for them both to smile at each other!), and then she would be in the Duchess’s arms, and before all her fine friends and her servants the stately Duchess would stoop in her

ROSELLE HERSELF

fine, fairy godmother garments, and kiss her little daughter very tenderly, "good-bye ! "

Still, this was only a dream, and the Duchess never kissed her that way in real life, because she was far too busy to remember to do it.

III

WHAT ROSELLE THOUGHT

THIS state of affairs continued until Roselle was eight years old, as I have told you; and then I don't know why Roselle changed, but she did change some-way, and made this story all for herself.

You know the very first remark that I made about my heroine was that she was a little girl about eight years old when my story opens, and that she was very lonely.

“I wish the Lambie would n't stand so much by the window just lookin' out,” Cross Cook said to Aramanth when she had come puffing and blow-

WHAT ROSELLE THOUGHT

ing up to the nursery with a small pie or cake for Roselle, and found the little girl standing by the window, leaning a trifle against it, and not laughing at anything at all.

“I do wish as how Lambie would talk to us and not just say, ‘Thank you, dear Cook,’ or ‘It was the very best pie of all this time,’ or some such thing like that.”

“Oh, she talks more to me,” Aramanth said quickly.

Cross Cook looked at her. “Like what does she say?” Cross Cook asked.

Aramanth stared. “Oh, well,” Aramanth returned, “she says, ‘Oh, thank you, dear Aramanth!’ and ‘It was the very best cake or lunch or dinner this time,’ or some little thing like that, and — and — well, I guess she only talks more because I am more with her. It’s

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just the same thing she says, time after time. To tell the truth, now I come to think it over, she has talked very little lately, taking it all in all."

Cross Cook's scowl grew deeper and deeper.

"She's the best Lambie as ever was," Cross Cook said, "and it isn't right that a Lambie like that should be unhappy; so the minute I leave the room, Aramanth Mary Duffy, up you go and say to her, 'Miss Rosie, what be you thinking of? I don't know why I want to know, but know I *must*, Miss Rosie!' You must put that part in, so she won't know that we talked about her." (I think that was very wise of Cross Cook.)

Well, all this was carried out nicely, for after Cross Cook left the room, Aramanth went over to the window

WHAT ROSELLE THOUGHT

and sat down on a low seat beside her little mistress, but the very strangest part of the story was that Aramanth did not have to ask Roselle of what she had been thinking. It seemed the right day for the lonely little heiress to want to tell Aramanth of her own accord. She moved nearer to Aramanth this day, and raised her great wistful eyes to Aramanth's rosy face.

"I have been thinking," she said, "and I did not know it was so late until I saw the public-school children running home for lunch. It almost made me hungry."

"Are you hungry?" asked Aramanth, "because Cook brought you a nice little pop-over."

"Oh, no, I am not hungry really, thank you, but it almost made me hungry. I mean if I had been a public-

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school child, also, and was running home to lunch, and my mother was there, and a big table, and lots of little brothers and sisters, and some nice food like that you used to eat, when you were a public-school child, Aramanth."

"Oh, you are lots better off than a public-school child," Aramanth answered after a while, not knowing just what else to say. "You know your ma is very rich, Miss Rosie."

Now Aramanth tried to think of something else to say to her little mistress, but she could not just at first. You see, Aramanth was not half the stupid person that one might think. She was a poor, uneducated girl, it is true, but she loved this little girl very, very dearly ; and often and often when Roselle was sleeping, Aramanth would lean over her crib, and say, "God bless

WHAT ROSELLE THOUGHT

her," as she wiped away some tears that would come to her eyes, when she gazed on this little child in her beautiful bedstead that cost hundreds and hundreds of dollars, perhaps.

Aramanth's bed had been home-made, and had held three at a time when she was small, but she had been happier than this little girl, because every night when her eyes were just closing, around had come the poor woman, smiling just as the Duchess had smiled in Roselle's dream, only she was no dream-woman ; her kiss was so tender and her lips were so warm. So this day Aramanth tried to think of something good and kind to say to the little girl before her, but all she could think of was this : —

" You know some people is poor and some people is rich, Miss Rosie,

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and generally the rich people do not send their children to the public schools."

"If I came home every day to the Duchess, maybe she would be gladder to see me," the little girl exclaimed, as if she could not help it.

Aramanth sat staring at her.

"Even then your ma might not be home," she answered. "She might just be invited out that day. Poor mothers can't go to so many places, but your ma is not the same. Lots of people ask her to parties and will keep on asking her, so long as she is rich."

Roselle had turned her face, but at these words she turned it back quickly until Aramanth could see that it was all lit up to what it had been. Her eyes looked bright, and her voice sounded more cheerful.

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“Are we very rich?” she asked Aramanth suddenly.

“Powerful rich,” returned Aramanth.

The child stood looking at her ; she was very young and did not know quite all that money gets for people. So she clasped both little hands over Aramanth’s knee, looking very hopeful.

“Could n’t we *lose* the money, Aramanth?” she cried, after a funny little pause, — “lose the money, like people do sometimes in books?”

Aramanth stared at her. “There is too much of it,” she replied at last, hating to disappoint the little girl, but thinking she had better be truthful, for Aramanth believed this about the Duchess’s money. But Roselle did not give up so easily ; she put her elbows on Aramanth’s lap now, and leaned over on her.

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"Aramanth," she continued quite excitedly for her, "mines can lose money for people, and banks can lose money for people, because I have read it, and — and — the Duchess must lose all hers too, Aramanth!"

Aramanth's blue eyes were wide, wide open.

"How do mines lose money for people, or banks lose money for people?" she asked. She knew herself really, but she just wanted to see what the little girl thought about it. Roselle paused a bit, then she went on slowly, —

"Oh, I don't know exactly, dear Aramanth. I never thought of that part of it, but now you ask, it seems easy enough. They must just drop it into the mines, dear Aramanth, I guess."

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She stopped because Aramanth was smiling. She was a very serious little girl, and did not understand why Aramanth smiled, but when she found that it was a kind smile, she did not mind it at all, but went on talking.

“You know a mine is a place where men go to get money, and a bank is a place where people go to get money, so that is why some people drop money in, and the Duchess can lose all hers, — don’t you see, Aramanth, the Duchess can lose all of hers. We would be so happy !”

Aramanth’s blue eyes actually filled with tears, but she said, for all this, —

“You will have to be happy without doing that, Miss Roselle, because if your ma lost some money three times, and then three times over, there would still be some left.”

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The little girl looked very much disappointed.

Her lips quivered and she half turned her face so that Aramanth could not see it. Other times she would have just leaned her head against kind Aramanth's shoulder and cried about it, but this was different.

It had seemed such a nice way to end everything, and make her a dear friend of the Duchess. She just stood looking out of the window, but after a while she turned full around and looked at Aramanth without smiling. It was as if she had endured everything she could, and just could not be happy any longer without confiding her troubles to Aramanth. She looked very little, and very lonely, and rich, when she said it, for the Duchess liked them to clothe her in beautiful dresses,

WHAT ROSELLE THOUGHT

so she had on a pale pink flannel dress to-day, very pale and very soft, like a baby's. It had white delicate trimming on it, too, and a great silk sash which had become half undone and reached down to the floor, but Aramanth was too interested in talking to notice this.

Roselle's usually kind little face was pale, too, almost as pale as her pretty dress, and her hair fell soft over her little shoulders. It was fair hair too, and indeed all of her was fair just that moment except her eyes. Her eyes looked quite dark all at once, almost as dark as the Duchess's.

"I am tired of being a rich child," Roselle cried. "I am very tired of being an only child; I am very tired of being rich. I should like to be a poor child and have some brothers and

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sisters to play in the street with, and I'd like a little live baby in place of my doll! I should like my dress to be torn and my hands to be dirty, and have no French to learn and no lessons to say. I should like to live in one little room with the Duchess, and on the day when we were veriest happy, to give buns away like the baker's girl!"

Aramanth could not quite tell how surprised she was.

"Lor," she cried, and that only, "Lor, Miss Roselle!"

The little girl stood before her very straight, and her head thrown back a trifle as if she were proud, but I am sure she was not so, for when she spoke, her voice was merely lonely.

"I am glad you called me Roselle," she said. "I like Roselle; my name is not Rosie."

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Suddenly, with never a word to say that she was going to do it, the poor lonely little heiress buried her face in the soft rich curtains and burst into tears.

"I am tired of being a rich child," she sobbed; "I am tired of being a rich child, Aramanth. I want to be poor."

Aramanth dropped her sewing quickly, and getting down on her knees by the little figure, enfolded it in her strong, kind arms. Her voice sounded sweet and tender; and while she talked, she kept patting one of Roselle's shoulders, with the fair curls hanging just over it. And she said the same things many times, just as she had when Roselle was a baby.

"Poor Lambie, little Lambie dear, don't fret," she whispered. "Don't fret; don't your old Aramanth know

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just what you are thinking? Don't your old Aramanth understand? You want me not to call you Miss Rosie, but to call ye Miss Roselle, because the Duchess gave it to you herself at your christening. Shure, darlint, yer Aramanth knows," she continued, patting the poor little girl and talking. She knew that Roselle wanted some one to love her, that was all. She had been with Roselle since Roselle was a wee little baby, and she could almost tell what the little girl thought. If one of us raised a little baby from the day when it was in long clothes, and if it cut its first tooth right in our very presence, and said its first words to us (and almost talked with a brogue at that), and walked its first steps from a chair to us, why could n't we read its thoughts almost?

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She took Roselle in her strong arms and rocked back and forth with her, just as she had when Roselle was only a year old, and gradually the rich little girl's sobs grew quieter. First it had seemed as if all the public-school children and the baker's child and all children were happier than she.

It even seemed as if the baker's child in her gingham pinafore were ten times happier than she, because once when the baker's little girl, who was about Roselle's own age, had fallen and was crying as if she were hurt — what do you suppose happened?

Even while Roselle watched her, an anxious woman had hurried out of the little shop, and taken the little one in her floury arms! Then the little girl's tears had ceased flowing, as if by magic, and she had raised her damp

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little face to be kissed ; and it was then that Roselle remembered that the Duchess had never kissed her that way, and if she had fallen, it was always Aramanth who caught her up in her tender arms.

Poor little heiress ! She had felt very badly at first, but after a while Aramanth's arms were so strong and her voice so kind that little Roselle felt better. Then Aramanth said, —

“Now you're going to eat the nice little lunch that Cookie brought you, while I go down and ask Cook what to do about us. Cook knows everything, and she will be able to think of some way to get rid of all the money, or something better still.”

So while Roselle sat eating her nice pop-over, Aramanth went down to consult with Cross Cook.

IV

WHAT CROSS COOK SAID

CROSS COOK was working in the kitchen when Aramanth came down. Cross Cook often worked when she should be eating her lunch ; and then she ate her lunch when other people were working. Was not this funny of her ? And no one on earth knew why she acted this way except Frances, a maid, who used to say always "that Cook did this or that just because she was Cook."

It may be ; at any rate, every one believed her.

Well, Cook was bustling about the kitchen to-day, and all the other ser-

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vants were in their own dining-room eating and enjoying everything very much.

Cook listened to all that Aramant told her, and then she made such a great fuss stirring something about the stove that James came running in to see what had fallen down. When James went back, every one said, "What fell, James? What was it?" and James, who was quite a funny fellow, answered just as if he meant it, —

"Cook fell, when trying to get on her 'igh 'orse." (James always said 'igh and 'orse, because he was English.)

In reality, Cook had poked at the fire in that violent manner because she was very angry. She loved little Roselle, and she knew the little girl was unhappy, and Cook just "boiled" when she thought of it; that was the whole

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truth. Indeed, it was just what James meant about her, when he said that she fell getting on to her high horse ; he meant that Cook was angry, only Cook called it "boiling." I suppose she was so used to boiling and roasting and frying things that she just used these terms without thinking, and more than this, had n't she often said quite of a sudden, "I'm all in a *stew* !"

Aramanth sat at the kitchen table with her elbows on it, and her nice round clean face buried in her hands. She had n't come down to see Cook boil, so after a bit she said, just as if Cook were a dinner, "If you've got done boiling, Cookie, won't you tell me what to do?"

"Oh, Madam had better tell you," Cook replied. "Go to Madam and have her for to tell you."

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“Madam really has n’t any time,” that innocent Aramanth answered. “What with all the orphan asylums, and that Home for Friendless Children, and that place for old people, why, Madam has n’t much time.”

I think this sounded so funny to Cook that it made her good-natured, that this fine lady was so busy over other people’s children that she had no time for her own little girl. It really was very funny, but it made an idea occur to her.

She stood in the centre of the kitchen with her fat, round figure and her red, red face, only this time there was no scowl, only a smile on it.

“My wery adwise,” she said (Cook often made a mistake and said *w’s* where *v’s* should have been said), “my adwise,” she said, “is to ask Madam

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what she thinks of it. Let little Lambie go to her herself and see what the beautiful Madam thinks of all these subjects what her own little Lambie tells her."

Aramanth stared admiringly at Cook and said just as sincerely as could be, "What a smart woman you do be, you dear old Cookie, you! What a smart woman you do be, Cookie! Shure I would have got brain fever before I could have thought of that!"

Of course it does not seem very wonderful to us,—not the kind of thought that might make one have brain fever,—thinking to send a little girl to call on her own mother, but the Duchess lived in a big, big house, and that might have made a difference. At any rate, Cook was delighted at Aramanth's compliments to

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her, but made believe as if she were not so.

“Oh, you get right out of this kitchen, Aramanth, you!” she said, “and you need n’t tell me, never again, but what you never kissed the blarney stone.”

Aramanth went out laughing. “And me never in Ireland!” she cried, for of course the blarney stone is in Ireland, and they say that all the real Irish have kissed it, because of all pleasant people one ever met, some Irish people are most pleasant. You find out about the blarney stone and you will know why.

Once outside the kitchen door, Aramanth started running.

She felt very happy and ran upstairs too. She surprised the little rich girl, who sat at her table eating.

WHAT CROSS COOK SAID

“Lambie, guess what it is,” she cried. “Cookie found out a fine way for us. You are to go to call on the Duchess yourself and ask her advice about it. You are to tell her all about your being tired of being a rich child, and wanting to be a poor one, and — and — I don’t think the Duchess would want to get very poor and cook her own meals and make her own fires, but she might get you a little poor child to play with. I am sure it was that what Cookie thought.”

The little girl could hardly eat her supper; and when bedtime came, she could not sleep for thinking of it, and then after her eyes once closed at last, she could dream of nothing but herself standing before the door of the Duchess’s bedroom, knocking, knocking at it; but it was nearly morning

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before any one opened the door and let her in. Then just when she was most interested about discovering what the Duchess would say to her, there it was really morning in her own room and Aramanth was smiling at her, and telling her "to wake up."

V

THE DUCHESS HAS A CALLER

THE Duchess was really a very beautiful person, the papers said. Seldom a day passed but there was some notice about her sayings or doings, or what new dress she wore, or the last place at which she had been.

A great many grand and wonderful people used to call every few days on her, at least a great many people used to call, in grand, wonderful dresses. This kept her very busy, as you see.

The Duchess's right name was Mrs. Samuel Blake. Now, I must tell you something about Mr. Samuel Blake,

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who died when Roselle was such a baby.

He had been a bonanza king, that is, a person who had once been very poor and then had made money suddenly, and then died.

He had married the Duchess quite suddenly too, when she was a young girl. One day he built a big house and put a great deal of furniture in it, and then he went to young Mrs. Blake just as the princes do in stories.

"You must marry me, my dear," he said. "I—I love you."

A prince never said anything prettier, so young Mrs. Blake (who was not Mrs. Blake at all yet, but just plain Mary Some one), why, Mrs. Blake married him, for all he was an old man, old enough to be her father.

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Well, this morning that Roselle was to pay her young mother the call, the Duchess was in her own room writing. It was about ten o'clock; and every time the sun danced, the hair of the Duchess looked like gold instead of brown. She was sitting at her desk in a pretty wrapper, and she must have been very young when she married old Mr. Blake, for she was very young yet, and her marriage to him had happened fully ten years before.

"Is my mamma so pretty to you, Aramanth?" little Roselle used to ask often; "or do I only *think* she is pretty?"

Aramanth always said that she really had never seen any one living who was quite so handsome as the Duchess, and she had never seen a picture so pretty either, but there was a statue in her big

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church that was nearly as pretty as the Duchess, maybe prettier!

Some day Roselle was going to see it, and she thought it must be very pretty, a very pretty statue indeed, for the Duchess had big eyes, wide and very pretty, and she was tall and graceful and had the sweetest voice you ever heard. Her voice was prettier than the statue's, anyway.

The Duchess was never at home in the afternoon. Sometimes it was the Christian Mission of which she was president, or the Home for the Poor Children, or an afternoon tea, and as Roselle's lessons came in the morning, they were not great friends, she and her little daughter; that is, not as great friends as Roselle and Aramanth, or Roselle and Cross Cook were, or even Roselle and old French Monsieur. In

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fact, often all they found time to say to each other was, "Good-morning, my dear," or, "I am very well, I thank you," or, "Good-bye, Roselle."

Of course people do not become greatly acquainted under these circumstances.

Well, the Duchess sat at her desk this morning and the sun made gold threads out of parts of her hair, and presently when she was least expecting, there came a little rap-a-tap-tap at her door.

The Duchess stopped in the midst of a yawn to say to herself, "Oh, dear me! I hope no one wants to see me so early, because I am so busy," but aloud she called, —

"Come in!"

The polished door swung open slowly.

"Oh!" cried the Duchess, very much startled. It was Roselle!

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The little girl came in and stood still a second, her big eyes fixed on the Duchess's face. Then she remembered what she always said to Monsieur when he came to give her her French lesson, so she said just the same thing to her lovely mamma.

"Good-morning."

"Oh, good-morning," replied the Duchess. "You must come in and sit down."

She was not a bad-hearted person, only she was not used to children, and she did not think how most mothers would have run forward and kissed the solemn, big-eyed little creature. "You must come in and sit down, dear," said the Duchess. "I am very glad to see you."

"I am in," the little girl returned politely. She was not used to society

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manners, because they lived so simply, she and Aramanth, so she did not think but that the Duchess made a mistake about her, and thought her still outside the heavy door.

The Duchess clapped her hands, laughing. "Oh, what a funny little thing you are!" she cried, amused by it; "what a funny little thing you are!" and she drew a big chair nearer to her own and made the little girl sit in it. There they sat looking at each other, this beautiful, beautiful young mamma and this sober little girl. And neither spoke just for a moment, for the very good reason that the Duchess hardly knew what to say: she who was usually so brilliant and so clever with most of her company felt quite dull all at once with this one little girl in short dresses, whose feet could not even

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reach the floor. Then Roselle thought she ought to say something, so she did.

“I thought I would come and see you,” she said, looking at her mamma.

The Duchess reached out very kindly and took hold of a limp little hand.

“Don’t you think you ought to call me something, dear,” she asked very sweetly; “don’t most little girls call their mammas something?”

The little girl studied the sweet, beautiful face.

“Oh, I call you the Duchess,” she answered simply; “we always call you the Duchess,—Aramanth and I. Sometimes we call you the beautiful Duchess.”

Mrs. Samuel Blake’s face flushed as if she liked it.

“Why do you call me that, my dear?”

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"Because Aramanth and I think you look like a duchess," Roselle replied. Now Mrs. Blake had seen a real duchess several times, and she did not think much of them really, but she did not tell her little daughter this.

"It is a very beautiful name," she returned kindly, "and I am quite sure I like it very much." She did not know much else to say, so she asked after a little, —

"Is there anything you want, my dear, — a new doll or a book or a ride in the carriage; or would you like to go to the country with Aramanth? or maybe you want a watch like mamma's; most little girls like a watch."

Roselle sat looking at her, so the Duchess went on, evidently thinking that this was just what she should say to her little girl, —

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"I will buy you a gold ring with a stone in it just like the one I wear on my finger. How will that do, my dear?" and the Duchess laughed gayly just as if she had struck the right thing at last.

"I don't want any of those things, thank you," Roselle replied. "I only want some one to play with."

"Oh, we can get that for you, dear, I am sure. I don't know why I never thought of it, but there are lots of little girls I know who would be so happy to come and play with you. Sometimes when I go to see their mammas, I see them too,—and, dear me, I do believe I did ask them to come and play with you, but I have been too busy to ask them again."

"One or two did come," Roselle said; "but we did not play very much,

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because sometimes their dresses were too pretty, and then when I showed all my toys to them, why, nothing was new. They all had the same kind of dolls and doll-houses and toys themselves, so everything was old to them."

The Duchess looked a bit at sea; that is, as if she did not know quite how to take it. "Well, what are we to do?" she asked, looking very helpless.

"I want a poor child," answered Roselle. "I think that is the only thing we can do about it, if you please."

The beautiful Duchess looked aghast. She dropped Roselle's hand and leaned back, just staring.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, in quite a startled way, "you want what?"

"A poor child," her little girl returned. The Duchess said, "Dear me!" again and stared harder than ever.

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Then when Roselle did not say any more, the Duchess stopped staring and fell to laughing just as if she could not stop. She was a very light-hearted young thing, you know, and when she understood just what it was that her rich little daughter wanted, she thought it the very funniest joke she had heard for some time. Roselle sat on the edge of the chair before her ; and when the Duchess looked at her thin little legs dangling above the carpet, though she had half stopped laughing, she began again. Here was a little girl in a big fine house, with a beautiful mother and a very kind nurse and toys and nice clothes and plenty of goodies, and yet she was not satisfied.

The Duchess liked to tell funny stories, and she thought this would be a very funny story to tell her friends,

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how her little girl had come in to call on her one morning, and asked for a poor child for a plaything.

Then she wondered what Roselle would do with the child after she got her. Of course her friends would want to hear that too. So she asked presently, —

“What would you do with a poor child after you got it?”

“I should make her happy,” the little girl replied. She did not know why the Duchess laughed, but she was like every one else in this particular. The more any one looked at the Duchess, the more sure one became that the Duchess was right. The Duchess stopped laughing, or rather let the laugh end in a rather queer little smile, not the kind of a smile that seemed to enjoy things very much.

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"I did not think you would answer in that way," she said simply. "You see, I thought you would want a poor child to play with and to keep you from getting dull or lonely."

"Oh, I should," the little girl replied; "I should love to play with her and show her all my toys too, and then to make her happy."

When she said this for the second time, the Duchess ceased even to smile, and her face grew very sober, and she sat looking straight before her, just as Aramanth always did when Roselle talked of poor people before her.

"Are n't poor children happy?" she asked. Her face was suddenly very sad, and something came into her eyes all at once, that all the rich people had never seen there. It was tears, tears actually in the Duchess's eyes; and

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when Roselle looked up and saw them she felt like crying too, just as she had felt like smiling back at the Duchess when the Duchess smiled, without understanding what the smile was about. The Duchess did not wait for Roselle to answer her question, but asked another at once, —

“Who told you about poor children?”

The child slipped down from her chair and stood beside it. Her face was alight now, and her voice eager and interested. “Aramanth was a poor child,” she replied, — “Aramanth and the cook and the butler and James and James’ little girl. All of them have been poor children, even the French teacher. He was a poor boy in Paris and used to blow on his fingers, so they would not freeze. I love to hear him

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tell stories about it, and how he had a little sister who died because she did not have things to eat, and at the end of the story we all cry about it, — Monsieur and Aramanth and I ; and he has a great, great handkerchief to cry in, like my little table-cloth.”

The Duchess shivered, and the little girl went on, —

“I should like to make a poor child very, very happy,” she said.

She stepped a little nearer the Duchess’s desk and told the Duchess what she thought about children. It seemed easy to tell her, after all, easier than she and Cook and Aramanth had imagined.

“You see we did not think about your getting me a poor child at first, and then it was Cook who thought of it.

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“First, I wanted to be a poor child myself, but Aramanth says that we cannot lose our money, and —”

“And what?” asked the Duchess.

“And that you would not like to give our money away.”

“It would take a long time to give our money away,” the Duchess answered sweetly. “And then we might not know to whom we should give it, for bad people can do a great deal of harm with money; and, besides all this, if one is very careful, it is nice to have the money, little Roselle.”

“That is what Cook says,” little Roselle replied, sighing.

The Duchess held out her pretty white hands. She did not say anything, but she seemed to be thinking; and I can almost tell you what it was that she thought, — no rings, and no beau-

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tiful house, and no lovely dresses, no servants, no dinners, no parties, no carriages, and no long line of grandly dressed friends.

Just then a maid came to the door and said, "A lady to see you, ma'am!"

The Duchess pushed her papers back a little and half frowned. "So early," she said, "dear me! Well, just say I shall be down shortly and make her comfortable, Frances."

Roselle stood listening, then the Duchess remembered her. "You must run off and play now, dear," she said kindly, "but you may come and see me again, and then we can talk matters over, but meanwhile—" laughing very gayly,—"I give you my promise that you shall have the very poorest child we can find."

As Roselle still waited, the Duchess

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leaned over and stretched out her hand. It was a very white hand, and the little girl placed hers in it.

"There is something you have forgotten to tell me? Maybe you want a new necklace for your dollie, or some chocolate candy, is that it?"

"I wanted to kiss you good-bye," Roselle said.

The Duchess held out both arms now, and her face grew very warm to look at, and she stammered something about being very stupid because she had sat up so late the night before.

The little girl went off with the Duchess's kiss still warm on her lips; but when she reached the door, the Duchess called her, and Roselle went back. The Duchess held out her hand again, and took Roselle's with it, just as she had before.

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"There is something I want to say to you, my dear," she said; "I think it is a mistake about poor children's not being happy. Some poor children are very happy, happier than you or I, or all those little girls who wear such pretty dresses. The reason I say this is because I understand about poor children. I used to know one."

Roselle looked very happy, just as she had done when she heard Aramanth's poor story. It seemed very lucky, the Duchess's and Aramanth's both having known poor children!

"Sometime I shall tell you about her, Roselle," said the Duchess. "She was a little child when I was little, and when I grew to be a big girl, she grew big also; but I do not think

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she was ever a good child, or a good woman. She was a disappointment, I think."

"What is a disappointment?" the little girl asked.

"A disappointment is something that does not turn out quite right," replied the Duchess, after she had thought a second.

Then the little girl went off to where kind-faced Aramant waited, but she did not run, as some little children might have, the little children who go hippity-skip. Little Roselle walked slowly, and somehow all day she thought of that word of the Duchess, "a disappointment," something that does not turn out quite right, and somehow it seemed to mean her call on the Duchess.

It had been a very sweet, kind, polite

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visit, but somehow it had not turned
out quite right.

Aramanth told Cook about it. "So
what shall we do now, Cookie?" Aramanth asked.

"Jus' wait," replied Cookie.

It was good advice.

VI

ABOUT THEIR SEARCH

THEN two or three days passed by.

Roselle thought that the Duchess had forgotten about the poor child, but she kept this thought to herself. Sometimes, when the Duchess drove off of a morning, Roselle would watch her anxiously until the carriage had driven away. And Aramanth, who was not half so dull as the Cross Cook thought her, felt very sorry for the poor little girl.

“Miss Roselle,” she would say, “what doll will you play with?” or, “Miss Roselle, shall we walk through the Park to-day?”

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But little Roselle would shake her head sadly.

“My doll will not talk, dear Aramanth,” she would answer gently, always very gratefully too, “and I am very tired of the green in the Park. I am quite sure I will get my poor child, Aramanth; maybe the Duchess is extra busy to-day. The Duchess has gone out in the carriage; I am quite sure she will bring me a poor child to-day.”

But each day the Duchess drove back alone, looking very tired, without the poor child. Roselle never “let on” to Aramanth about it, as Cross Cook might say.

Such a faithful, affectionate, loyal Roselle! She learned her lessons and ate her meals and waited for the Duchess, and the strangest thing about it was that the Duchess really came.

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One day after Roselle had eaten her simple breakfast and Aramanth had taken the dishes away, what should happen, but that the Duchess walked in!

She looked very beautiful that morning, but then she always looked beautiful.

Her hair was curled and laid close to her forehead, just as with the pictured Duchess, and a long plume from her big hat touched one white ear. She looked like a wonderful dream, her rich dress sweeping the beautiful carpet, yet really a very simple Duchess, very simple and sweet, if one judged by her expression.

"Aramanth!" she exclaimed brightly, "where is my little philanthropist?"

Roselle did n't know what "philanthropist" meant, and neither did Aramanth for that matter, but she came

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forward to where her mother could see her, then the Duchess smiled and Roselle knew that she was a little philanthropist—whatever it meant. She had just guessed it before.

“Get on your hat and come with me,” said the Duchess. “We have to find that poor child, have we not?” Then she turned her face a trifle.

“Aramanth, may I take your girl?” she asked.

“Sure, ma’am, the first claim is yours.”

A soft light came into the Duchess’s eyes, but she looked at Aramanth, smiling kindly.

“Then, Aramanth,” she said, “may I take my girl?”

Of course Aramanth said, “Yes, ma’am,” very gladly, so Roselle went off happily.

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They went that day to the Orphans' Home, and though the Duchess had been there a hundred times, she never forgot that one short little visit.

She took Roselle into the great brick building where two hundred little poor children filed in and out daily, or, worse than that, spent night after night, motherless and almost friendless, within those grim walls, no one to dry their baby tears, no mother to take them close in her arms, no one to laugh at their bright little sayings, except these paid nurses, like Aramanth.

They were always glad when visitors came to see them. They were learning some lessons when Roselle entered, and she and the Duchess went in, hand in hand; so when she stood there by the side of the Duchess, all the little poor children stared very hard. They

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were used to ladies coming to see them, but very few little rich girls ever came.

Roselle looked back at them wonderingly. She had never seen such a sight before. All the children were dressed alike, in a little plain blue calico apron, and they all looked very clean, but so much alike that one could hardly tell, if one were to call them, which was Mary and which was Annie. Roselle watched them, creeping a little nearer her mother, as if she wanted to hide her fine cloak from them; and the Duchess, well, she did a strange thing too! Taking Roselle's hand, she drew her closer; and just for one moment it seemed as if her heart were full of a great love and pity, so maybe the Duchess was learning a lesson.

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The Duchess had always been good to these little ones, and had always given the head people large sums of money, and each Christmas sent them a great number of toys; for some had no homes, and some had no mothers, and some poor little creatures with pinched, love-starved faces had been charity children since their birth. In return, of course, they were all very fond of this beautiful lady, and as if to prove this, as the last line marched slowly by, one little girl handed the Duchess a rose. She was a shy little soul with soft, tender eyes and a dear mouth that was made for a mother's kisses, just such a dear babyfied little creature as any mother would love.

Well, as the Duchess bent graciously to receive it, a question seemed to occur to her, so she asked it.

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“ I thank you very much, my dear,” she said, oh, so sweetly, “ but why do you give me the rose ? ”

The little girl glanced up. “ Because you are so pretty,” she replied, blushing shyly. The Duchess held out her kind gloved hand and took the little girl’s in it, just as she had taken Roselle’s several days before. Then she drew the little poor girl to her, and bent down and kissed her in her own sweet way.

“ Some day I want you to give a rose to me because I am good,” she remarked, and then let the little girl pass on with the others.

“ Oh, you are good to them, ma’am,” the head woman said. “ No one ever gives so many toys to them, and no one ever sends them so many clothes.”

“ Still, I am not satisfied,” the pretty Duchess answered. This shows that

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she was a sweet, honest creature too, ready to acknowledge her fault as soon as she knew it was a fault, which is right for us all to do. "You see, head nurse, I am afraid I have only come and sat here and thought I was giving enough when I gave the toys and the clothing. I think I should have smiled oftener at them, and — and — maybe once in a while I might have shaken hands with them, or taken the poor little creatures onto my lap."

She was watching the head nurse in her sweet, undecided manner, just like a young girl who has done some little thing wrong, and is asking an older person about it; but the head nurse could not find fault with the Duchess, because the Duchess was so beautiful. That was what every one said about the Duchess. She was always so smiling

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and sweet and lovely that it was easy to spoil her a little and think that everything that she did was good. Of course this is not exactly right. It was not fair to the Duchess, because it made her keep on smiling and looking pretty, and not thinking whether she smiled because she meant it, or just smiled because it made her pretty.

After that the Duchess pinned the white rose onto her coat, and it made her look lovelier than ever, because it was just the same kind of creamy color as her cheeks, and then she and Roselle sat there, side by side, both in fine brown coats with fur on them.

When the children had gone out and were playing, the Duchess whispered something to the head nurse, and the head nurse smiled and looked at Roselle kindly. She had never seen

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Mrs. Blake's little girl, and she was interested in seeing just what kind of a child this beautiful Mrs. Blake had. She could not tell very well from looking at her, as she was just like lots of other little girls of eight or nine, only she had bigger eyes than most children; and she had a very quiet, polite manner, and spoke as if she were older and more tired than the little orphans were. I think they all played so much in the fine fresh air that they could not help running and feeling jolly.

"So you are the little girl who wants one of our children?" the head nurse said.

"Yes, if you please," Roselle answered. "I should like one of your little girls, one of the very poorest little girls, and I will be very good to her — oh, so good to her!"

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The head nurse smiled, but shook her head gravely, nevertheless.

"You seem like a sensible little lady," she said to the child, "so I am going to tell you just what I really think."

Roselle's expression grew disappointed, but she stood listening bravely, and while the head nurse talked, and Roselle listened, the Duchess watched her little daughter.

"Maybe I am a foolish old woman," the head nurse said to the little heiress. "But I think it better to leave the little things where they are and bring them up amongst their own kind of people. It is good of you, my dear, but it would be the spoiling of most of the children, not to speak of those left behind. It would make them very unhappy and jealous, and put foolish

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ideas into their heads ; then if they did not suit you, it would be hard work taking them back."

Roselle could hardly speak, and the Duchess seemed to know it, so she put her arm around her little daughter and pressed her to her. And you don't know how much better it made Roselle feel. Then she was such a clever Duchess that she actually spoke as if she were disappointed also, even more than Roselle. "I think we wanted that last little girl, Nurse, didn't we, dear?" she asked, feeling it very nice, all at once, to have her own little girl so close to her.

The kind nurse shook her head again. "That last little girl has two sisters, both in the asylum, and it would be very wrong to separate them," the nurse replied.

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So there was nothing to do but for Roselle and the Duchess to go out to their carriage and tell James to drive them home; but when they arrived home, the Duchess did not leave the little girl in a hurry, as usual. She stood in the great hall a minute; and when Roselle began to mount the stairs, the Duchess went and stood by the balustrade until Roselle had climbed enough stairs to make both of them just one height, one just as tall as the other, and then the Duchess kissed Roselle over the polished railing and said, "You must not mind, my dear, will you? because there must be a great many poor little children, and we shall try again to-morrow."

She stood at the foot of the stairs watching the little girl go from her, and then when Roselle was out of



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sight altogether, the Duchess still stood and stood. She did not quite know of what she was thinking. While, as for Roselle, she went right into the room where Aramanth was waiting and laid her little hands on Aramanth's lap.

"Aramanth!" she exclaimed, in a very eager fashion, "what word does not mean disappointed?"

Her eyes were bright (and Aramanth told Cook later that Roselle looked very happy, like a different child).

"You must know, dear Aramanth," she insisted, "the word that means a thing really comes out all right, the word that does *not* mean *disappointed*."

Now guess what Aramanth told her! Aramanth had never been very good at her lessons. "APPOINTED," was what she said.

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It was very hard to find a poor child, strange as you may think it, for the very next morning they went out again, and this is all the success they met with, for "succeed" was the word that Aramanth had meant when she told Roselle that the word was "appointed."

Cross Cook had told them about a poor woman who lived quite a distance from them in a narrow street.

The way that Cross Cook learned all these things was the greatest mystery. The Duchess could not help telling her so when Cook stood in the hallway that morning.

The Duchess had gotten her little girl, and they had walked down the big staircase together, both very, very happy, I am sure; but when they reached the lower hall where John

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stood at the door and James sat out on the carriage, the Duchess paused in her pretty way and said, —

“It is all very well to say we are going to get a poor child for you, but where shall we go to find her?—I shall never, never have the courage, dear, to go out and sit in the carriage, and when James says, ‘Where are we going, Madam?’—answer that I do not know!”

She said this, looking quite as if she meant it, except for a little smile about her eyes, which Aramanth watched shyly because she had seen the same look before. Then Aramanth glanced at Roselle to see how Roselle was taking her young mamma’s joke, and Roselle was looking greatly worried, very much so indeed! The little girl thought that the Duchess was quite in earnest, and

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she sympathized greatly with her, because when James sat on his high, high seat, and wore his tall hat and his stiff, stiff expression, and also his stiff, stiff collar, he was a very stern-looking person indeed. You never thought him the same James who joked so much in the kitchen, not at all.

So as Roselle and her mother stood side by side there, Roselle opened her lips impulsively. "Cook will tell you of some one," she exclaimed. "Cook knows everything!"

The Duchess sent Aramanth after Cook, and now along came Cook in her clean morning dress, her clean white apron, and one foot in a slipper, just as it usually was. The servants always thought Cook's bad foot funny, only they never dared to tell her so. They said that Cook could not live

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without thinking that she had a bad foot, only (this is the funny part of it) Cook often forgot which foot was bad, and just wore her slipper on the foot it was *nearest* when she got out of bed.

“Cook, you must help us out,” said the Duchess. “We want a poor child, and maybe you could send us to some poor family that wants to become rich.”

Cook could never look at the Duchess without getting a softer look into her eyes, right under the scowl too, and both being together that way, smile and scowl, made Cook look funnier than ever. She was a kind soul, Cook was, and she said that she did know a poor woman, and she told the Duchess just where the woman lived, even to the stairs it would take to reach her,

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when the Duchess smiled in her pretty way on Cross Cook and said, —

“Dear me, Cook, you are a wonderful person ; Roselle says that you know everything, and indeed I believe it.”

Cross Cook was the most pleased old creature in Christendom. And when Aramanth told the servants later “that, shure, Cook was that puffed up by the Missus’ blarney that she (Cook, mind you) could hardly get through the kitchen door,” why, Cook made as if she were very angry, but she was n’t, take my word ; because if any one in all San Francisco loved the beautiful, sunny-eyed young Duchess dearly, it was Cross Cook herself. Now I have told you, for that was Cook’s one big secret from everybody, and when the servants said to her, “Oh, you would spoil little Miss Rosie. You

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must love her best of all the world" — they never knew what Cook meant when she used to answer, "It ain't neither. That's all you know. One is closer to my heart — one was *first* there;" and they used to think it was some other little girl where she used to live. Yet all the time it was the sweet, gay young Duchess herself, a young grown woman, whom Cross Cook had known the last ten years now, and whom Cross Cook loved very first, as the children call it, and I really think that she would have done anything for little Roselle because of the Duchess, as well as for her own dear little sake.

Well, the Duchess and Roselle drove off happily. James did not know about their conversation with Cross Cook concerning the destination,

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so he did not think any less of the beautiful Duchess for her not having known about her order. He just sat very straight and drove them to the little street where the Duchess had told him, after Cross Cook had told her, and it seemed in the very beginning that James's wife's sister had told James!

The carriage stopped at a high, high dingy house that just looked like so many lines of dusty windows with no doors at all to speak of, but there was one of course at the first story, a very little door indeed. Roselle had never seen one quite like it before. It was such a little door, and such a little square place to stand, after one once got inside the door. It was all new to Roselle, but the Duchess closed her eyes a second, as if she did not quite

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like it, and then they went up a great many rickety stairs and along a great number of cramped dark little halls. First there was an old carpet on them, and then there was no carpet at all, only very dark old boards, and then, after all this trouble, what was there but the poorest room of all? Still, I should not quite say that, because love and kindness beautified every little nook, and there was the face of the Kind Man Who so loved all little children, smiling at them from the wall.

The poor woman did not understand what they wanted at first, but she dusted a wooden chair with her apron, and bade her rich visitors come in.

But the Duchess did not take the chair. She made the poor woman be seated with her on a rough-looking

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box, and then they sat and talked things over.

She was such a sad worn-looking woman, and how the tears fell while she tried to talk. "She was very poor," she told the Duchess, "her husband was dead, and she had one little girl; sometimes she had no work. They had nobody to help them" (like the story that Aramanth had told), "and more than all this, the little one was lame, sick, half-starved, and helpless, but she could not sell her child to the Duchess, the lady could see for herself."

Rising, she threw open a door, and Roselle and the Duchess followed her into another room, where the child was lying. It was a dark room, shut off from God's blessed sunshine, the free beautiful sunshine, and the little girl looked very ill.

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The Duchess went forward very gently. Roselle had never seen her look so lovely, but the little sick child did not seem to see her. She was looking into the poor woman's face and at the love that shone in the woman's eyes. Then the Duchess slipped back without speaking, after she had looked at the child a second.

The poor woman sobbed outright; she fell on her knees and looked up at the Duchess.

"She is all I have," the poor woman murmured, — "God's only reward;" then she let her head fall on the little one's pillow, and Roselle stared at her strangely, and the Duchess turned her own head away, for she seemed to understand in a minute that all her money could not buy that poor little child.

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And it could n't, but what do you suppose it did? It made the poor child well, and the poor woman happy, and let them live together for a great number of years, until one day the Great Heavenly Father took the little poor child for no money at all, and, strange as it all may seem, the poor woman was not unhappy about it, for did not the good Christ say, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven"?

It is quite a pretty story, is it not? How sweet to find such a story in such a dull old house, and how glad James's wife's sister must have been when she dropped in on the poor woman later, and the little sick girl cried as she entered the doorway, —

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“A *angel* has been here to cure me !
She had no wings, but a beautiful hat
on, where the feather was instead,
and — and — she is goin’ to get me .
well.”

VII

GROWING TO BE FRIENDS

AFTER the visit to the little sick child, Roselle and the Duchess grew very friendly. Roselle would drop in often and talk to the Duchess about the things she had done and the mistakes she had made, or maybe only about poor children; but whatever it was or however they parted, the Duchess never after forgot to kiss Roselle good-morning, although she had sat up ever so late the night before, and one day the little girl went in to Aramanth dazedly, with her soft eyes shining and her little face flushed.

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“Aramanth,” she said, “I am very happy,” all because the Duchess had knelt down at their parting and put both arms around her and said, “Good-bye, my dear,” while her face had looked like the baker child’s mother, only ten times more lovely, Roselle had thought. Then sometimes they would drive out in the carriage together.

In fact, it grew to be a natural occurrence for the Duchess to wait for her little girl, and how gladly the child would run downstairs to join her, and how glad Cross Cook felt about it all!

“Things are as they should be,” she would say to Aramanth about it; and Aramanth agreed with every word that was said, for if any one was gladder than Cross Cook over the matter, that one was Aramanth. Yet Roselle and the Duchess never did find the right

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poor child somehow, although such funny things kept happening all the time.

One day it was something very funny.

The smart coachman nearly drove over a poor child. Of course that in itself was very far from being laughable, but the little fellow was not even hurt and dodged the horses' hoofs in a way that made every man around cheer him, as men will cheer plucky boys. Well, before he could get out of sight, the Duchess flung open her carriage door, and stepped out anxiously.

The little fellow had lost his hat and stood there, proud and flushed and panting; maybe he did not know quite how near death he had been.

The Duchess opened her purse and took out a piece of money.

GROWING TO BE FRIENDS

"You are a brave boy," she said with one of her kind beautiful smiles, though her face was still very pale from her fright. "Will you take this and buy a new hat with it? My little girl would like you to."

What do you suppose that little chap did? He put his hands behind his back and looked up at the Duchess fearlessly.

"I should like a new hat," he replied frankly, "but my mamma would not like me to take money from ladies."

And he walked off like a little man, hatless and with very patched breeches, but didn't the men around him shout!

The beautiful Duchess stepped inside her carriage. "Bless his heart!" was all she said, which was an old-fashioned remark for a duchess, but it meant a great deal, for this is what she said to

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the stiff-backed footman, as he helped her out later on, —

“John, find out about that boy for me! I think a good chance in life would not spoil him. He seemed to have the makings of a man.”

So John said, “Yes, ma’am,” very civilly, and he got the information for the Duchess, and Roselle and the Duchess between them gave the child a good chance in life.

Still they were not satisfied.

VIII

THE DUCHESS BEGINS TO AWAKEN

IHAVE told you that Roselle and the Duchess grew to be very great friends, and that they went out driving every day together, and of course you must have guessed that Roselle was happy.

Well, I think that the Duchess was happy too, only she did not know it, and this is what makes me think that the Duchess became happy unconsciously. For instance, she would wait each day for the child, hardly knowing for what she was really waiting. Yet after a while, the Duchess must have

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learned to expect her, for one day when Roselle did not come, the beautiful Duchess called for her carriage, as usual, for their morning drive. When it stood down by the stoop, near the lions, all waiting, the footman, the horses, all ready, the Duchess went down the stone steps wonderingly as if she had forgotten something that she wanted to take. Then halfway down she paused a second. The servants had often seen her stop in the selfsame manner when she misplaced her shade or her fine velvet wrap.

Yet all this time she did not guess what she was missing, and she could not send them after it, because she did not know. So though the color mounted her young face slowly, she stepped into her carriage, and James drove her away.

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It was a beautiful morning, and they drove down a beautiful street, lined on either side with stately houses and calm, lovely gardens and sweet green lawns, yet the Duchess was not very happy. It did not seem beautiful at all. She could not tell why it seemed so dull and so gray to her. Then all at once, without thinking, her eyes chanced to fall on the seat in the carriage opposite to her own, and she remembered how once they had taken Roselle's doll out for a drive, and the doll had sat on that seat like a fine young lady. Roselle herself had sat there sometimes also. The Duchess could almost see her now in her wide hat and her loose little cloak and with her sweet eyes. The Duchess thought of all these things as she drove along. They had been so very happy those

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mornings, she and Roselle. They had so enjoyed talking to each other. Sometimes the little girl would tell her stories about the servants, and how kind and good they had been to her, and again she would tell the Duchess about her little friends and what children played when they had a party, and what all of them said, and one day Roselle had told the Duchess that the very first thing she remembered in her life was sitting out on a sand-hill when she was a little bit of a creature, and having a stiff white little dress and a stiff white little cap on. Lots of other little children were playing also, probably all dressed the same, and each child had a nurse also, doubtless in a stiff white apron and a white cap too. And suddenly a lady had driven by, a beautiful lady in a handsome carriage, and

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all the nurses had put their caps together and spoken to one another in low voices.

One had said, "Is n't she a beauty, though?" and another had said, "Did you ever see any one quite so handsome?" and yet another had said to them, "It takes a pretty case for so fine a jewel." But all Aramanth, dear Aramanth, had done, was to lift Roselle from the white sand into her own lap as she whispered, —

"It is your ma, your own pretty mother, dearie dear."

After thinking of all this, it did not take the Duchess long to remember that it was little Roselle herself whom she was missing that morning, whom she had actually forgotten on leaving home; and after this she lay back very suddenly with a queer light in her

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eyes. She must have been thinking very hard also, for she forgot to look out until the carriage stopped.

She went to some meeting, and all her friends noticed how silent she was, and when at last she arrived at her great house again, her heart was really beating in the strangest way.

She did a strange thing, too. She did not wait for John to open the carriage door, but just got out by herself somehow and walked rapidly across the sidewalk and then before everybody (that is, everybody who was looking!) she actually ran up her own wide steps, while John stood with his eyes very, very wide open, looking after her. No one has ever found out just what John was thinking, but he did look surprised.

Straight on like a child ran the beautiful Duchess, up the fine stairs through

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the silent halls, on, on, never stopping. There was only one room in all the house that she cared for, and that room held her child. You see, she had grown so used to her little daughter that she thought something terrible must have happened when Roselle was not near.

Suddenly she reached Roselle's room. She was very pale and very frightened, but she opened the door.

"Aramanth," she cried, for Aramanth had come forward to meet her, "where is my little daughter?"

"Aramanth," she again began—but she could not go on. Her voice really seemed to fail her, so she laid one trembling hand on Aramanth's shoulder and leaned heavily against the wall.

It was while she leaned there with very frightened eyes that she heard some one moving across the room, some

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one who came like a little cyclone, not as the child of a duchess (even a make-believe duchess) should. Not at least as we might imagine she should !

It was Roselle herself who had sprung out of the bed in which poor Aramanth had been trying to keep her. She had been almost asleep when the Duchess entered, but at the first sound of that sweet voice, she had started up with such happy eyes, for one little short, short second, standing weak and trembling, then the seven-leagued giant must have lent her his boots, for, staggering, big-eyed, she ran toward her mother, and the Duchess pushed Aramanth gently aside.

What do you suppose happened just at that moment? You know several things often do happen quite close together. The Doctor for whom Ara-

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manth had sent in a very great hurry, to cure Mrs. Blake's little sick girl, came, and there what the learned gentleman saw was Mrs. Blake and her sick little daughter and Aramanth and a Maltese kitten all crying together, but happily, for folks will sometimes cry when they are very happy, and the Maltese kitten did n't know what else to do. Was it not very funny? I wonder what the Doctor thought when he first looked in on them. Anyway, he did n't charge for that visit, he saw the little girl did not look *dangerously* ill, so he went home, and once outside the house, he buttoned his great-coat up tightly. Then he began to whistle. He had known the Duchess since Roselle was a baby, and I really think he was happy too.

IX

THEIR AFTERNOON

YOU can't imagine what a happy afternoon they had afterwards, Roselle and the Duchess and Aramanth and the kitten, with some games. First, they had luncheon together, and the Duchess was so afraid that Roselle would take more cold that she sat close to the bed and drew the table there also, and played that she was Roselle's own nurse. And the Duchess looked very pretty, very pretty indeed, if I do say it, as she passed this thing or that to the little sick girl and forgot ever so many dishes too !

But Aramanth would laugh at this, as if it were very funny, and she would

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get the very thing herself, salt or butter or what not, and so everything went on very well, after all, while the kitten ate everything he could, and played with imaginary strings until they grew tired laughing at the silly little creature. And about three who should come calling, but Cross Cook herself!

They heard her coming along the hallway long before she reached the room. One shoe would go down, and then a slipper, and between whiles Cross Cook would puff.

Was n't she surprised when she reached the door, though! She expected Aramanth to open it as usual, and she gave her usual big rap, but, dear me, you could have knocked her down with a feather, so she said, when the door swung open and there the Duchess stood!

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She had on a very pretty dress just as usual, but she stood very stiff and unlike herself.

"How do you do, ma'am," she said to Cook, just like a little girl playing at lady, "and have you come to see Miss Roselle? Well, we are all more than delighted to see you. Come right in."

Cook was more and more surprised at this reception until she saw how Aramanth was smiling, and then she understood. And then what did the dear old creature do but play at lady also! Was n't it jolly of her?

In she came in a very stately manner (at least as stately a manner as Cross Cook could, walking in one shoe and one slipper!) and holding her calico skirt wide with both hands. Roselle laughed outright when she saw her,

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—“You sweet dear old Cook,” she cried, both little hands held out to her ; and then when Cook took them, Roselle raised her face, and her lady visitor leaned down and kissed her, while the Duchess stood by and smiled.

Then Cook sat down, looking happy, although she tried not to show it, and she talked about this or that to the little heiress, while Roselle grew better each moment, until Cook asked what was the matter with her (in the “most politest manner” too, as she herself expressed it), and what do you suppose that Roselle replied? “This morning I had a sore throat,” she answered, “but laughing made it all better.”

“So you have no sore throat at all now?” Cross Cook asked still politely.

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“ Oh, yes ! ” the little girl returned, just as sweetly, “ only it is a better kind ! ”

Well, they just continued playing games like that until it was time for supper, and then what did the Duchess do but propose that she should play Aramanth's place, and Aramanth play hers, saying it all so sweetly that Aramanth really could not refuse.

“ You are tired out, Aramanth, you see,” she said, “ and I am not, — no, not at all, my dear girl. You have been waiting on us all day, and I want you to sit down for about an hour, so that you will get your red cheeks back again.”

Aramanth's cheeks became red quite suddenly before her rest even !

“ I should not feel comfortable,” she said, “ sitting down while you are getting supper.”

THEIR AFTERNOON

Mrs. Blake almost stamped her foot. "No one minds me at all in this nursery. I think I shall go home."

Aramanth hurried off quickly, and came back with a clean stiff cap and a big white apron. "Oh you shall play me if you want," she remarked, handing them to the Duchess; "only you must wear these, or we will forget who you are."

It was the first joke that Aramanth had ever played on the Duchess, and the Duchess appreciated it very much. On she pinned the cap, and on she tied the great glossy apron, and then she turned round to them, and both Aramanth and Roselle were delighted; for never did a nurse have nicer curls, or courtesy in a sweeter manner, blushing a little bit the while.

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It was a splendid supper. The Duchess set the little table; and when everything was quite ready, she brought in some broth for Roselle and some nice warm chops for good Aramanth; and while they ate both, she stood in her white cap and her long white apron and sang them a pretty song.

Roselle did not understand the words, but she liked the music, and Aramanth liked it very much. In fact, it was for Aramanth that the Duchess was singing, because she had made Aramanth take off her cap and her apron and wanted her to forget work for once.

So Aramanth sat and listened, looking very strange with her hair just plain back and no cap on it, and her dress all just dark and neat, and you could tell from Aramanth's face that she enjoyed it.

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It was a very, very beautiful song, all about a pretty woman, a very famous song, only they did not know it.

First, there was something about the country and then this : —

“ Her brow is like the snaw-drift,
Her throat is like the swan ;
Her face it is the fairest
That e'er the sun shone on.”

After it was all over, Aramanth sat quite still, for the room seemed to be all full of the Duchess's voice even after she had stopped singing. There never was a more appreciative audience, and it rather made the Duchess embarrassed, so she did not know what to say until she saw that Aramanth did not know what to say either, so she thought it was kinder of her to speak first. “ Did you like my song, Ara-

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manth?" she asked almost shyly. Aramanth did not seem a bit embarrassed now. She looked up at the Duchess with a very direct, honest gaze. "The music was beautiful, ma'am," she said, "like that the great people sing in church, and the words might have been writ about you."

It was as sweet a compliment as the Duchess had ever received, and she looked greatly delighted with it.

"I want to say something now," she said. "It is like a little sermon, and you and Roselle must not think it is to you I am speaking, because there is some one else in the room, only this came into my head and I want to say it. Beauty is very, very nice if it makes other people happy, and that is the way with a beautiful voice. God gives some people a beautiful face,

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and some other people a fine voice, and some other people a lovely disposition. If we keep these gifts to ourselves, or think over them in a vain, selfish manner, we are like a little child who won't divide his good things with other children. After a while he is tired of them, and they have become so old and ugly that no one else appreciates them. I think every night we all ought to pray, 'Please God keep us good little children.' "

Then she went and sat down at the little table and ate supper with them both, and Aramanth really liked it, the Duchess was so kind and gentle, and said so many witty things.

After this it grew dark, and only the firelight was in the pretty room, so they could barely see each other. Then

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the Duchess went over to Roselle's bed and laid her hand on the little girl's as if she loved her. There is a difference, you know.

"Roselle," she said, "we have had a good time playing all these things, my dear, and I have enjoyed it just as much as you have, but I am lonely now, so will you end by playing the real game with me?"

Roselle put both her arms around the Duchess's neck without needing to be told another word, and the Duchess picked her up as if she were a baby, and went over before the fire, after first laying a thick shawl around the thin little night-dress. First, the little girl scarcely breathed, it was so wonderful to her, lying warm, warm against the Duchess's heart, but soon after the Duchess kissed her. She was so very



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happy then that she fell asleep before she thought, but the Duchess sat on before the fire.

Soon Aramanth crept away.

“I never saw the beat of young Missus to-day,” she said to Cross Cook down in the kitchen. “She has laughed and cried and played games and chased the kitten and sung songs and preached one little sermon, like she was preaching it to herself, and now she has little Lambie in her arms before the fire, a lovin’ her, and little Lambie has gone to sleep that tired! Yet young Missus still sits on just as if she was carved.”

Cross Cook turned her back to Aramanth and nearly pulled a big pan off the stove, just as she always did when she was excited and wanted to make people think it was all the stove;

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and she said something with " poor " in
it.

" Poor little Lambie ! " Aramanth
thought it was, but no !

" Poor young Missus ! " was what
Cookie really said.

X

A NEW KIND OF MEDICINE

THE Duchess was very busy that next month, and so Roselle did not often see her. Some great lady was here from Europe, and it seemed that every one had to give her a dinner, or a grand reception, or a theatre party, or some high tea affair. Of course Roselle did not think of blaming the Duchess, because it was n't the Duchess's fault, but how she missed her mother!

Before she and the Duchess became so happy, she had never known how easy it would be for her to learn to love the Duchess as a mother. It was

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very strange that she had not thought of it, was it not? but it was all in her heart now, — love such as the baker child felt for its floury mother when it came home from the public school; love such as you feel for your mother, dear reader; love such as I felt for mine; love such as all sweet little children feel the wide world over.

It is true that she talked more easily to the Duchess, that is, she felt more at home with her; but still they were not such great friends yet but that the lady from Europe separated them terribly.

Roselle only saw the Duchess once in a great while, and then only for a few minutes at a time. She had been so very happy that she hated to be unhappy again as in the times before they knew each other, so one day

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when they had met and she had barely said "Good-morning" before she had to say "Good-bye," why, she almost told the Duchess about it, how much she loved her and how much she missed her, and how very, very much she wished that the great lady had stayed in Europe, but instead of doing this, she just held on to the Duchess's hand a moment, and it seemed as if the Duchess were holding the very same way onto hers. Then they left each other, and all that long, long day Aramanth knew that the little girl was unhappy, very unhappy indeed, and Aramanth told Cook about it, and added, moreover, "that she thought it was very sad for all that the little girl had such a wonderful bedstead, and so many pretty things, and so much money." Cross Cook replied, —

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"It would be worse if she had no money;" and Aramanth thought a moment, but even then she could not tell, so she simply answered, —

"Well, it is sad, anyway," to which Cook returned quite crossly, for she really was cross this time, —

"Well, there is another side to the story; maybe the Missus is unhappy too."

And really there was that side to it, for the Duchess was almost miserable over the way affairs had turned with her, after the day when Roselle was sick, and they had been so happy together.

You see, just as on the day when she had gotten into the carriage, she began to miss Roselle too, only at first she did not know how to account for the feeling. It was so new and so

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strange and so lasting. It was quite a mysterious emotion also. It did not up and say frankly, "You are lonely ; you need your little girl." It just crept into her heart, this strange feeling, like a little child that was too young to talk. So it could not tell this beautiful young mother what was the matter with her. It could only sob and nestle close to her, as very little children do. Then the days grew longer and more tiresome to her, and because she had formerly been very happy with rich and worldly people, she did not understand it at all, so she thought she was sick and sent for the family Doctor. He was the same Doctor who had whistled, you know, and he was a smart, good man, and moreover he liked the Duchess, so he made up his mind to cure her.

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"Now what is the matter with you?" he asked the Duchess when he came into her room and saw how well she looked except that her eyes looked quite sad and unhappy. "What is the matter with you? Now, I am an old man, and I think you ought to treat me better. I think you really sent for me to see how pretty you look in that new pinafore."

"Oh," cried the Duchess, laughing at him as she always did when he said something funny, "when people get as old as I am, no one calls their dresses pinafores, Doctor! This is a gown. I want you to give me some medicine that will make me sleep. I have only a little time to talk to you, as I am almost on my way to a garden-party, and then I have to go to tea at a friend's, and after that to dinner, and

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maybe a concert later, unless I can get out of it, and then I want to sleep. You see I don't sleep well lately, Doctor."

"I should want to sleep too, if I went to all those places," he said to her. "In fact, it would be hard work keeping me awake until I got to the last one."

The Duchess rather liked him to scold her, so she said, —

"It is all very well for you to look so stern about it, but that is n't going to help me, so you might just as well give me a prescription to make me well."

The old Doctor's face softened. "Well, what is the matter with you?" he asked.

"I do not sleep well," his patient replied; "I want you to give me some medicine that will make me sleep. I

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have lost interest in everything. I go to parties, but I do not enjoy them. I have no pain, and nothing hurts me ; but I have nothing else to make me unhappy, so I must be sick."

The Doctor leaned forward as if he were studying her. "Maybe it is a cold," he said, as if he meant it.

"No," said the Duchess ; "I am quite sure it is not a cold."

"This won't do ; this won't do," the Doctor went on, as if he were greatly in earnest. "Have n't you any headaches ?"

"No, no headaches," the Duchess returned ; "no aches at all." (Then she waited a couple of seconds.) "Sometimes I don't feel exactly well," she continued ; "but it is n't an ache."

"There is only one thing I can think it is," said the Doctor, seriously.

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"There is only one thing I can think it is, because it has to be something or you never would have sent for me. It is a *heartache*! That is the only kind of an ache there is that makes a person feel as you say."

Of course it was a joke, and she should have laughed at it, but just at that very moment her heart did begin to feel funny. She had never known quite where the feeling was before. After this, something came into her eyes, then ran down her cheeks, and suddenly even while the Doctor was looking at her, she raised her pretty hands with the fine rings on them just as a little girl might have, and commenced to cry, keeping on as if she could not help it. The old Doctor sat looking at her, and he felt very queer too. He began to find great

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use for his handkerchief, unfolding it, rubbing his glasses with it, and smoothing the white hairs on his bald head.

"Tut, tut, my dear," he said to the Duchess; "tut, tut! you are very foolish. Your complaint is not incurable" (and he winked all to himself). "I think I can cure you before morning."

"How?" sobbed the Duchess.

The old Doctor smiled all to himself.

"Heartaches are not much in my line," he told her; "but if you want an old-fashioned prescription, you will find it at home, and not at the theatre or at parties or at fancy balls." He did not know how she would take this, but she did not seem at all angry. She merely lowered her hands and appeared interested.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

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"I mean this," replied the good old Doctor: "that you can cure yourself better than I can cure you. The cure lives in your own house, and if, inside of three days, you are no better, I'll know you've not taken the right kind of medicine, so I may have to find it for you. But remember this," he said, shaking his finger at her, "I'll charge you three prices, if you are not bright enough to help yourself."

She bade him good-bye and then even after he left she stood at the window and watched him, as if she would love to open it and call him back, just for a couple of moments, until he told her what he meant, but of course she did not do it. All the neighbors would have been so surprised. Then Frances told her that James was ready to take her to the garden-party,

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so she went down to the carriage still with that lonely look in her eyes.

It was a very nice garden-party, and a great number of sweet ladies were there to whom she talked, only sometimes when they talked back to her, she found herself giving a little jump and wondering what they had been saying, so it shows that she was not listening. It was a nice tea afterward, too, but as there were ever so many more ladies the Duchess felt that she would not be missed if she left early, so she just spoke to the lady and went home. There did not seem to be any one there to talk to, so she felt quite stupid all over again and said to Frances, —

“ I am not at all well, I am sure,” so Frances made her lie down and rest before she had to dress for dinner.

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The dinner was very nice too, later. The Duchess wore a *grown-up* pinafore again that was every bit as beautiful as her afternoon one. In fact, it was even more beautiful, and she wore a star in her hair that sparkled any way you looked at it, so when she and the other guests sat at the handsome table, she was the prettiest person there, and every one looked at her. She was very gay, too, and smiled every few moments, saying such bright things meanwhile that she kept every one wondering about her. You see it is not every night that such a beautiful lady with such a wonderful star in her hair can sit opposite you at a dinner-party, and entertain so many people at one time.

It was quite late when dinner was at length over, about nine, I think, and when the lady who gave the dinner, and

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all the rest of them were in the parlor together getting ready to go to the concert, every one was surprised when the beautiful and entertaining young Duchess said suddenly: "You will have to excuse me if I do not go with you, after all, as I am not well." "Oh, my! Oh, dear me! Oh, my dear!" exclaimed every one of them; "why, you never, never seemed better, I am sure; when did you begin to feel badly? Oh, what is the matter, and when did it begin?"

As they all stood around the Duchess, looking at her and sympathizing with her, she hardly knew what to say, so she ended by explaining it this way:

"You see I have not been well for days, and to-day I had to call the Doctor and he — he — said that I ought to stay home really. I have been around

too much, so I have been feeling worse and worse all evening, so, so — I just can't go."

Two or three of the ladies took her in their arms and said, "Poor thing! just to think of it, and she so brave all the evening, too," and they made the Duchess go at once to her carriage, and they put her in themselves and kissed her very sweetly, saying they did hope she would be better next day.

Well, James drove her home alone, and while he sat high on his seat, up in the fog and the air, the Duchess sat in the dark with her thoughts, feeling so lonely and so heartachy that she fell to thinking about the Doctor's prescription and just the way he had worded it. She became less dull, thinking about him. He was certainly a very funny old man. He did not say, "the cure

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is in your house," but "the cure *lives* in your house," thought the Duchess. "I wonder what he meant."

It was nice and warm and light in her beautiful house when she reached it. Frances let her in, and there upstairs in her own little room was a tiny fire, and a soft light for her eyes, and an easy dress to put on. After she had changed her handsome gown and Frances had unpinned the star and was about to put it away, the Duchess asked abruptly: "Frances, who lives in this house besides you and me?" Frances stood holding the star. She smiled, thinking what a funny question it was of this fine lady. "In Madam's house," she replied, "there is Cook and one other housemaid and James and John and the sewing-girl and the nurse-girl and Madam's little daughter, of course!"

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Madam's white face grew young and lovely. "I am very tired," she said by way of explanation. "I seem to forget things easily, Frances. Thank you for remembering for me." Frances put the star away, but when she came back, the Duchess was not there. She had slipped out of the room and had gone down the hall smiling. "Oh, I am so glad, I am so glad!" she whispered again and again.

Do you know, cannot you guess, where she went, my dears?—just to take a peep at her medicine which was sleeping (imagine medicine asleep!) and then she stole back to her writing-desk. Frances did not know what she wrote, but she watched her.

"If Madam does n't look better already," she thought; "of course it was rest that she needed."

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Madam sat at her desk and she smiled as she wrote these words, —

“DEAR DOCTOR, — I have found the cure myself, really, but you shall have the three prices anyway, — any number of prices from your old friend, — the happiest mother in America.”

XI

SOME POOR PEOPLE AND A RICH CHILD

THE very next morning, long before the Duchess was up, a boy came to see Aramanth with a message from her sister, one who had married some years before. I really don't remember what her name was, but the message read, —

“Do com quickly to me. The youngest baby but One has brok hiz arm!”

Except for that *z* in *his* and leaving off her two *e*'s on *come* and *broke*, it was a very well-written letter, was it not? and then for the capital *O* in *one*

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also, just as if it were one of the babies' names.

Aramanth was greatly alarmed, as you may judge. She read the letter, bad spelling and all, and she understood that her sister must be very much excited and very unhappy over the youngest baby but one, so Aramanth ran upstairs quickly. "Oh, what shall I do, Miss Roselle?" she asked; "what shall I do about it?"

Roselle was barely up, but she immediately thought of something.

Her face lighted, and she looked interested.

"Oh, take me, Aramanth," she cried. "We will let the lessons go this morning. If there is any place I like to go, it is to see all the babies. I am so sorry that the youngest but one has broken his arm. What will he do when all the

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other babies are reaching for bread and milk?"

"Oh, I can't say," exclaimed Aramanth, "but of course I feel as if I must go and see my sister, and yet when I was running upstairs, I kept thinking about your lessons, and how it was maybe wrong to interfere with them unless you will stay home with Frances."

Roselle's eyes nearly filled with tears. "As if I were n't almost as fond of the youngest baby but one as you, Aramanth!" she answered. "As if I were n't almost as fond of the youngest baby but one as you! I would n't mind missing all my lessons just to see the baby when he is so sick!"

Aramanth saw her feelings were hurt, so she said quickly: "Shure, and he's fond of you too, dear, far, far fonder than he is of me, who is his own flesh

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and blood, or next door to it, the little rascal." Aramanth always called the youngest baby but one that when he was active; but I do not know whether it is quite the proper thing to call a baby that kind of a pet name when his arm is broken, but both of them were too hurried to pause and find out. Anyway, they concluded to give Roselle a holiday from her lessons and to start at once.

Roselle took one of her games, and Aramanth took a basket of goodies, and in less time than it takes to tell, they were out on the street walking toward the car, so very quickly that Roselle skipped every third step, or she never would have kept alongside of Aramanth and the basket.

It is great fun walking fast in the early morning; the blood tingles all

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through you, and as the fresh air fills your lungs, you feel like shouting really.

Roselle could hardly keep up with Aramanth once, but instead of her feeling at all badly, she found herself laughing instead.

“If the baby’s arm were n’t broken, it would just be *funny*,” she said, “and we could be going just as we used to your sister’s for a picnic. Was n’t it fun, taking all the babies all dressed up as if they were going miles, and then eating our lunches under the willow-trees? If the youngest baby but one is able, let us do that again to-day, Aramanth?”

Aramanth exclaimed, “Oh, if he only will be able!” and she did hope he would. Anyway, Roselle was so delighted with the morning that Ara-

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manth felt much better too, and by the time they reached the cars she was sure that the youngest baby but one was not so sick as his mother might think, which proved to be the case really.

It is true that the baby had broken his arm, but he did not look at all bad or very different, except that the Doctor had bound it up and told him to be careful. In fact, this is just what the Doctor had done when the youngest baby but one's father ran for him and cried, "Our little boy, next to the very baby, has had a terrible fall. Come quickly. He was climbing on the top of the lounge and fell off it." "The top of the lounge!" repeated the Doctor; "I never knew before that the tops of lounges were to climb on. My dear" (turning to his wife), "it seems that we have made a mistake all these years

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in thinking that our lounge was to sit on."

He was a very kind Doctor, so no one minded speeches like this, especially as he got up from his breakfast at once and followed the child's father.

Once inside the house, he leaned over the hurt baby talking soothingly to it, while some one sobbed and cried right near him, and that was Aramanth's sister with her apron over her head.

The Doctor held the little boy's hand and looked over his spectacles at the mother. "'Pon my word," he said, "I have made a mistake and come to the wrong patient. Here is the boy quiet as a mouse and brave as can be, and the mother acting as if she had climbed to the top of the lounge and then fallen off."

Of course every one laughed and Ara-

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manth's sister knew that the child would be all right, so she stopped crying, and when Aramanth and Roselle came, one would hardly know that anything had happened, except that it gave Aramanth and her sister something to talk about. They talked all day about it, how the youngest but one climbed up on the lounge, and how he fell off, and how his mother found him, and then how she thought he was killed, and how in all the fuss and commotion, as soon as the very youngest baby saw how the thing was done, if he did n't try to climb the lounge also and probably fall off too, to be just like his brother, and the sister was glad that Aramanth had come and they could have a nice long day together.

It was a lovely sunny day, and all the babies really did sit out under the willow

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with Roselle, and the youngest but one was there also, only he had to be careful and not move. And their dog was out playing party with them, and when it was all over, little birds hopped about them and picked up the crumbs, just as if they knew that one little rich girl and the poor clean babies were very harmless persons indeed; and all day long they were all so happy that evening came all too soon, and it barely seemed noon again when Aramanth came to the door, saying, "Come, we must run, Miss Rosie! It is five o'clock. It's dark it will be before we get back; and your ma might not like our being away so long."

Roselle put her hand in Aramanth's after they had gotten outside the gate and had waved back at all the babies: "Do you suppose my mother knows

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that I was gone all day?" she asked
Aramanth.

Aramanth clasped the little hand
more tightly. A month before she
could not have said this, but now the
answer seemed very truthful.

"Bless you, Lambie, surely," she
replied.

It seemed to make Roselle's feet
very light. They just danced now
instead of walking.

Now, I must stop to tell you what
the Duchess had been doing. The
Duchess really had missed Roselle
greatly. Not even Aramanth knew
that she had run into Roselle's room
the night before, just to kiss her little
daughter before she wrote that note to
the Doctor, so no one but the Duchess,
her very own self, knew quite how
much she missed Roselle that one day.

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The very first thing she did when she awoke was to send Frances for Roselle, because she wanted to see her then, but Frances just looked into the nursery and saw that no one was there, so she came back and said, —

“I think Miss Roselle and Aramanth must be out walking, because they are not in their room.”

So the Duchess felt disappointed. Still, as she dressed, she kept saying, “It will be just as nice, seeing her a little later.” So after a time she went into the nursery herself, only to find it empty, and she felt very lonely still, so she rang a bell, and up came the little housemaid.

The Duchess felt very sorry about Aramanth's sister's youngest baby but one and his misfortune, but she did want Roselle very much just that

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morning, and yet she was very kind
and sweet about it, just as she was about
everything else.

Indeed, after a while she even
thought she would like to go out to
Aramanth's sister's also, but no one
knew the exact number, and Cook
explained (which was very sensible
of her) that the Duchess might just
miss the two of them if they returned
early.

So the Duchess went back to her
room, and halfway along the hall she
saw an old man sitting reading the
morning paper. He did not even look
up when this beautiful young woman
passed him. "It is old French Mon-
sieur," explained Frances; "he never
sees anything except Miss Roselle, and
then he says he *bears* her; but he
would sit there reading, reading, read-

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ing forever, unless some one poked at him. He is so absent-minded that all he knows is that he ought to stay here an hour, so one day we tried him and up he got at half-past eleven and took his hat.

“ ‘I was to go some place at half-past ten and I was to leave it at half-past eleven, my good wife told me,’ he said, ‘so I think I had better be going, that is, *if I ever came!*’ ”

Every one laughed, and they gave him some nice soup and told him the joke about it, and he went home, smiling, to tell his wife about it, so that she would laugh also; but when he reached there, he had forgotten exactly what the joke was, so he could not repeat it to her, only remember that a lot of pretty servants had laughed at him and then brought him a fine plate

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of soup. He wished his wife had some also.

Well, the Duchess went back to her room, and wrote to a few people to whom she owed letters; and yet she did not write very much because she jumped up every now and then to see if any one were coming through the gates, but no one came.

The great lions just sat there, one on each side of the entrance, high on granite walls, but not looking down at all. They were just the kind of lions, if living, that would deceive people, until the people walked innocently beneath them, thinking the lions were looking straight, straight ahead and not noticing things at all, and then I am sure, before one were thinking, those very lions would growl.

The Duchess grew more and more

lonely as the day wore on, so about five she concluded to go out driving, because surely when she arrived home again, Aramanth and Roselle would be back. It seemed as if they had been gone very long. So James came with the carriage, and the horses stood prancing before the stone step with "Blake" written on it, and John held the carriage door open while the Duchess stepped in. Then James drove down one street after another very slowly.

"I do not want to go any place," Mrs. Blake said, — "just go here, there, or anywhere, please, John — tell James."

James drove here, there, or anywhere, as far as he was able. He was trying to fill in time, but at last he drove farther away than he intended.

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It was getting later then, and was quite dark, and at last the carriage stopped suddenly; and though the Duchess waited for it to start again, it did not do so, as it often did when a car was passing, or some little thing like that. At last John stepped down and spoke to her, "Don't be frightened, ma'am," he said. "James can't turn just this minute, and there is a crowd of poor people got around us. You just lean back and wait a few minutes, and I will stand right here by your side, so there won't be nothing as can harm you. Just don't be afraid."

Mrs. Blake gave a little laugh, and putting her hand on the carriage door, she opened it and stepped out lightly.

"I am not afraid of poor people, John," she said simply. "I used to be

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a poor person myself. I want to see what they are doing."

She did not know that not twenty feet from her Roselle and Aramanth were standing also, held in by the crowd. I must tell you how they came there.

They had not gone more than half of their journey from Aramanth's sister's house to the one they lived in, and they were hurrying along chatting gayly, when they heard the sound of many voices. It was as if a number of people were all speaking at once, and no one could tell what the words were, and then the next second they had turned a corner and found themselves in the centre of a large crowd. Aramanth tried to step back, but a man half took hold of her. "You might just as well go forward and watch the

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fun," he remarked, in a bitter manner. "Take the little girl up and let her see what the poor people owes to such as her'n."

Of course "her'n" was not polite English and he really was not a very polite man, but Aramanth saw how sick and how miserable he looked, so she forgave him. It was too late to get out then, anyway. The crowd was on every side of them like walls. Aramanth held the little girl close to her.

"Don't look, oh, don't look," she whispered; "just keep your dear eyes on me, Lambie. I will take care of you." But Roselle did not seem a bit frightened.

"Oh, I want to look at them," she replied, just as the Duchess was saying almost that very second. "I want to look at them, Aramanth." She stood on her

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tiptoes as best she could. Her face was pale, and her eyes were interested.

It seemed a strange sight. A great many men and women and even little children were huddled together in groups, while a man on a platform (really a box, reader) was talking to them; and every now and then, when he said something particularly clever, which he did in a louder tone of voice, why, every one—even the younger children—would call to him and clap their hands, but not in a very merry fashion.

Their clothes were poor, and their faces were thin and white and starved-looking, and they looked very strange to Roselle when they tried to laugh.

It really seemed as if their amusement were something to make some other person laugh. Aramanth tried

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to draw Roselle away, but she kept looking. "Who are they, Aramanth?" she asked.

Aramanth put both arms about Roselle's shoulders.

"They are poor people," she replied. "I am sorry we are here. I wish I had never took you to see the youngest baby but one. I wish we were safe home this moment."

"What are they doing, Aramanth?" asked the little heiress. She had wanted to meet poor people all her life, but now she did not quite know what to do about them. They all looked so hungry and so angry and so sad. She kept looking at Aramanth to find out about it. "There has been a strike, Miss Rosie," Aramanth explained to her, "and they are out of work, and are blaming the rich

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people for it, while the man up on the platform there, he is telling them to blame the rich people, and they believe him."

"Oh, why do they believe him?" asked the child. She did not seem to understand it. Aramanth saw that the little girl looked hurt. "I think it is because they have no money," she returned. "When they have no money it is easy to believe the man."

"He does not look like a bad man," the child returned bravely. "I think it is only that he does not know the *Duchess*. I wish the *Duchess* were here, and then she could help them. They would see how nice rich people really are. She would look so pretty to them too, Aramanth!"

It was very sweet of her to think of that part of it, how the beautiful

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Duchess would look like a lovely painting or a lovely statue to these folk. She thought it would be quite a treat for the poor people to gaze on her dear, sweet, smiling Duchess. It would make them feel sorry for misjudging rich people, kind, generous, rich people such as her mamma was.

She was not a bit afraid of them. She even stepped nearer the platform than before. The man on the platform talked on. A great many more people had gathered about him; and presently he asked help of those who were able to give it. He said that was the reason he stood there; it was not to make any disturbance, but to get money and food for the suffering people. He said that he wanted to see who of all that crowd of people would answer first.

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All the poor people set up a shout at this, and pressed nearer to the platform as if he were the only friend they had. Roselle and Aramanth were pushed nearer the platform with them, and as Roselle looked around, she saw that one woman had a baby, a very little baby at that. The woman looked very poor and thin and discouraged, almost sick. She had on old clothes like the rest of the people, and I suppose those old clothes had not a cent in any pocket, and maybe the poor woman did not even know where she would soon get one.

It was very sorrowful, and Roselle kept her eyes on the woman. She did not think about having money to give the poor woman, because she did not often have much money, as one might imagine rich little girls have, but

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Roselle wished the Duchess were there to help them. She was sure that the Duchess would not say no to all these unfortunate people who huddled together so.

Perhaps if some one, sweet and kind and true as her mamma were to appear suddenly, and instead of frowning at them, say gently, "I am sorry for you, my poor men," all their faces would change swiftly like those of sulky little children, when some one offers them a kiss or forgiveness instead of a blow. Then Roselle looked at the baby held in the arms of the woman. It was a poor, shivering, starved little thing, very unlike Aramanth's sister's youngest, who was pink and stout. Meanwhile the man on the platform kept telling them why they should give money, and yet no one came

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forward to give it. No one moved. It was just as if each hated to be the one to stir first. Roselle did not notice any of the rest. She kept staring at the baby, at the little shawl that was wrapped around it, and saw that although it was so miserable a little creature, it lay in the poor mother's arm, sleeping, as the infant Jesus once did in His. Then suddenly without thinking, and before Aramanth could stop her, Roselle had unbuttoned her own beautiful cape and thrown it over the poor woman's baby as it lay in its mother's arms.

She had to step forward a bit to do it, and they stood near the platform, as I say, so every one seemed to see her. It was a little thing for any child to do, but it showed the best kind of feeling, and that was what was needed just then. A poor girl near by her cried

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at the sight. She was a poor thin girl with great hollow eyes, and she was hungry and cold, I suppose, and tired, so she could not help giving way to her grief when something so sweet and unexpected happened. One thing she needed was sympathy, so even the tears made her feel better, and as it turned out later she was to get food also that night, so the poor girl had not any troubles except lack of work, and they even found that for her in a day or two. She sobbed very loudly all at once, and the people fell back when they heard her. Then one man who had seen it all gave a cheer, and then some one else helped him, while a big man with an old coat lifted little Roselle onto a step, so they could see her, and when they did, they stopped yelling and shouting, she

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looked such a little bit of a frightened
rich person.

"What is the matter with them?"
she whispered to Aramanth.

"They are thanking you for giving
them something. You were the first
one to help them."

Just then a strange thing happened.
A lady broke through the shouting
crowd. The people stood back to let
her pass. She had on rich clothes, but
her eyes looked good and pure and
tender. When she reached Roselle,
she took off her own cape and threw
it around the child as she stood there;
just in the same way that Roselle had
thrown hers on the baby, then with
one hand still on Roselle's shoulder,
she looked up at the man on the plat-
form. Her face was very pale, but
she was not frightened, and as she

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raised her eyes there were big tears in them.

"I give one thousand dollars in my daughter's name," was what she told him, and just for one moment, no one cheered or moved or spoke, then another woman burst out crying, and the same man who had shouted over Roselle shouted again for the beautiful lady, and I don't know what they all would have done if John had not appeared before them to help them out of the happy, cheering crowd. So first the Duchess gave the man on the platform her name and address, and then John picked Roselle up in his arms, so the taller people would not crush her, and Aramanth and the Duchess followed him, and before they knew it they were all safe in the carriage with James on his seat to drive them, and

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the shouts of the poor people growing fainter and fainter each turn the wheels made.

That would have been a fine time for them to become very dear friends, but an interruption to their friendship occurred just then.

XII

SLEEP

THEY all drove home in the carriage together, Aramanth and the Duchess and little Roselle. They were very quiet just at first and sat close together; in fact, the Duchess had little Roselle in her loving arms, and Aramanth sat alongside of them.

Then when they got more used to it, the Duchess asked Aramanth how she and Roselle happened to be there, and Aramanth told her everything, also how surprised she was to see the Duchess appear by the platform just when she did. The Duchess laughed

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a little, and said it was just like a story, was n't it? and she stopped to kiss Roselle when she said it, just such a warm, happy kiss as any mother loves to give to her little child, and then she went on to explain her coming to Aramanth. She told all about having been so lonely, and then having gone to drive, and what John said about the stopping of the carriage, and Aramanth retold the story to all of the servants that very night; and then James and John told their share of it, and after a while if Cross Cook did n't begin to tell something also, just as if she had been there too, and what laughing there was about her until Cookie up and said, "Well, no one is prouder of them anyway about it." Well, every one believed it, and so they excused her, the dear old soul.

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When the little parlor maid let them in, she told the Duchess that a very poor woman had come to see them about some sewing, and was waiting for the Duchess in the Cross Cook's room. The Duchess was looking very pale and tired, but she did not have the heart to say no to the poor woman, so she told the parlor girl to say that she would be in the library shortly.

The parlor maid went off with her message; and the Duchess and Aramant and Roselle were left together in the hall, the high, broad, beautiful hall, in which the Duchess had been wont to stand when the rich people were merry-making with her, and Roselle had watched them from the head of the stairs. Many lights were making it bright now, but not a bit gorgeous. Indeed, it was a large hall,

one must allow it, but very homelike, after all.

As the Duchess stood just so, after the little parlor maid left her, she had a queer look on her face as if she were wofully disappointed. This lasted fully five or six long seconds, and then her eyes turned to where Roselle was standing. Aramanth had removed the Duchess's coat from the little girl's shoulders, and she was standing all by herself, looking very pale and tired also, while her hat had slipped off her head and hung about her shoulders.

She did not look as tidy as usual, but just like the dream mother, the Duchess opened out her arms and knelt so that the little girl could run into them, and then they kissed each other many times while Aramanth stood by thinking. "If Cookie was only

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here! I wish Cookie was here to see it."

Then the Duchess had to leave them, so she said: "I do not think I shall be gone five minutes, surely not more than ten; and I want you to wait for me, so we may all go up the stairs together." Roselle clapped her hands, just as she always did when anything pleased her, and Aramant smiled. "Oh! we'd love to, ma'am," she exclaimed, thinking how happily everything was ending, and thinking it a very little thing for the sweet Duchess to ask of them. "You see, I want to eat supper with you," the Duchess explained, "and then —"

But just here she broke off and waved good-bye to them. "I'll be back in a few minutes," she said, and went off down the hall to the library.

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The poor woman had a great deal to say to her, and it was fully twenty minutes before the Duchess could go back. She was very polite, though, to the woman, because she felt that it was right and kind of her to be patient, and then she knew, moreover, that Roselle and Aramanth would not care greatly.

The great hall was lighted just as brightly when she went back, and it was just as warm and handsome ; but Aramanth and Roselle did not stir when she approached. They were sitting on a lounge together, and then the Duchess saw that Roselle's head was resting against Aramanth's shoulder, and that Aramanth had hold of her, and that the little girl was fast asleep.

"I did not mean to be gone so long," the Duchess said, looking at her daughter.

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"Well, she just couldn't help it, ma'am; it has been a long day, and we must have walked a long way. Shall I awaken her?"

"Oh, not for anything," the Duchess replied. She stood looking down at them, then she said, —

"She is not a very big child, is she, Aramanth, at least not very big for her age?"

"Oh, I don't know about that, Mrs. Blake," Aramanth answered. "Some of the neighbors' nurses used to say that of her, but I never let them think I believed it. She was better than their children, anyway."

The Duchess's lips were caught in a little smile, just as if it tripped on them.

"Aramanth, I can never say 'thank you' times enough, I fear, to you for loving little Roselle so well always."

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Aramanth just raised her honest eyes. "Well, the love has more 'n brought its own reward, ma'am," she answered. Was not that a pretty speech? The Duchess smiled gratefully at her, and then she bent down and lifted one of her little girl's hands. It still had some wild flowers in it.

"When Roselle goes to sleep like this, and you don't awaken her, Aramanth, how do you get her upstairs to bed?"

Aramanth did not think that a very hard question to answer. "She is a light little thing, for all I would n't let the other nurses say so, ma'am," she replied, "and so when she falls asleep in Cookie's room, as she has done often, I just take her up in these very arms which have growed used to her" (how tenderly dear Aramanth glanced at the child beside her!) "and up the stairs I

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carry her myself, for all John and James is civil about it and want to take her for me sometimes. And then when we get up into the nursery, I don't ever awaken the Lambie, ma'am, but undress her that easy, why, she might only think it was fairies touching her, if she thought at all about it, and then morning comes before she knows it; and there, instead of in Cookie's room, all dressed and tired, does Lambie wake up all nice and rested between her own cool sheets."

It was a very simple story, but it served to prove years of tender love and patient motherly kindness which this humble, honest girl had bestowed on her little mistress, when the little girl's mother had been occupied elsewhere.

All at once the Duchess reached down and took Aramant's hand kindly.

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"You have taken my place too long, my girl," she said simply, "and now I want to tell you that I am going to love and care for the dear little daughter all myself. See me begin, Aramanth," she exclaimed, half smiling. "You know that what you can do, a great tall thing like myself can do also."

She reached down and lifted the child gently. She took a few steps, and Aramanth thought that Roselle was too heavy for her, so she hurried forward and whispered, "Let me carry her for you, Mrs. Blake."

"Oh, she is not heavy," the Duchess replied. "Oh, it is such a light, light little body, Aramanth, only the love is heavy, such a great — great — big — love," and she said these words as if she were half dreaming or half talking to herself, and then she went

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very slowly, her lips still moving, up the stairs, straight to her own room, straight to her own bed. "She'll sleep there to-night, Aramanth," said the Duchess. "And in the morning it will be fun for you and me to watch her and know what she thinks when awake."

"Oh, she'll think it dream land still, I am sure," Aramanth answered, "dream land still come true;" and then she tiptoed away from the Duchess to go and get Roselle's night-dress; but when she came back, her eyes were red, and somehow, though she tried hard to turn her face away, the Duchess caught hold of it.

"Aramanth, you have been crying," she said. "Now tell me at once what is the matter. You are not jealous of me, my girl?" Aramanth sobbed

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right out then. "Oh, Mrs. Blake, it is not that," she said; "it is not that you have Miss Rosie; because Cook and me, we always wanted you to have her, and her to have you, and both to have each other jus' this way, but it was what Miss Roselle and I was a saying before she fell asleep, that now you had given away all your money, why, maybe you would think that you had to do without me altogether, and — and I don't want to go."

"And what did Miss Rosie say?" the Duchess asked, much interested. "Oh, that she did not want me to go neither, and that was the only sad thought either of us had when you gave away all your money."

The Duchess laughed and laughed. "Who told you that I gave away all my money, Aramanth?" she asked;

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and then she did not wait for Aramanth to answer, but took her by both shoulders and steered her toward the door. "Oh, Aramanth, you great goose," she cried, "did you think that one thousand dollars was all my money? Oh, you and Roselle need to go to public school very, very badly, and as for doing without you, you dear, dear creature, why, Roselle and I could n't at all. You must just stay here and help us to be happy" (then she smiled more and more), "and now you can begin this very minute. Go and tell Cook about us all."

And Aramanth went off, leaving the Duchess to undress her little daughter, and was not Cook glad? John said she acted like a kitten, and James said she was playful as a colt, but Aramanth disagreed with both of them. She just

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put her arms about Cook's red neck and said that Cook was a *dear*.

It was a happy household that evening anyway, and Roselle slept clear through it, just think ! but she was to have the happy surprise in the morning.

XIII

ARAMANTH

IT made Roselle very happy to awaken in the Duchess's room. She did not know where she was just for a second, and then after one look at the Duchess's face and at dear Aramanth, who was smiling at her, she stretched out both little arms. "Oh, Mamma," she cried, "this is lovely."

The Duchess was very much pleased, but she thought she would try one of her funny jokes on her little daughter just the same, to make things even more lovely, so she said, —

"I am glad you like the beginning, dear, because I have a great deal to tell you later, and you may not like

it all quite so well." Still they had great fun dressing. Roselle put on her usual clothes because she forgot for a little, but the Duchess arrayed herself in a plain black gown that was so very plain (and yet really pretty) that I am sure the old Doctor would have called it just a dress. After that Roselle remembered and she looked very sober all at once, still she did not like the Duchess to think she was at all unhappy, so when they went into the dining-room together, she tried hard to eat her mush and milk, but soon she just could not stand it any longer. "Mamma, may I be excused?" she said; "I want to go speak to Aramanth a minute. I have to do it, but — but you are very good."

The Duchess sat looking after her flying figure, then she arose and fol-



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lowed Roselle quietly. She did not make any noise at all, in fact ; so when she arrived in the servants' room, neither Aramanth nor Roselle were aware of it, so she simply stood by the door looking at them.

Aramanth sat in a low chair before a little stove, which was nice and cheery ; and just at the very moment that the Duchess reached the doorway, Roselle arrived at Aramanth's shoulder and leaned there with her face against it, just as she had in the dear old nursery many and many times.

"Aramanth," she asked, slipping one little hand around the dear creature's neck, just as she used to, "Aramanth, have you found out yet how much is one thousand dollars?"

"Oh, it is millions and millions," Aramanth replied, pressing the little

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face closer. Roselle patted the nice red cheek.

"Is it more than a twenty-dollar piece, dearie dear?" Roselle asked, next. If she had n't borrowed Aramanth's own name for herself, and she was using it on the dear nurse.

Aramanth wanted to cry and laugh both together.

"Lor! much more," she returned.

"How much more?" asked Roselle, anxiously.

"About ten times more," Aramanth replied slowly. As Roselle was not very good at arithmetic, neither knew this was entirely wrong. The Duchess stood and listened to them. She knew that listening was excusable just this once, and she did want to hear the whole conversation, so that she could surprise them both afterward. Roselle

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had both arms around Aramanth's dear neck now, and she began talking.

"I don't see what we are going to do about it," she exclaimed, "but it does not matter. It will not matter at all, Aramanth, because we can still love each other. I thought maybe the Duchess had given away all her money, and now I am sure she has. I told you last night about it, but this morning again I got to thinking that I have twenty dollars every year for Christmas presents, and if one thousand dollars was only a little more, maybe the Duchess could still keep you for my nurse. But now I see she could n't, only don't you go away from us, Aramanth; don't you go away at all. I think the Duchess is not rich any longer, because she has no rings on her fingers, but you will never be in the

way, Aramanth, however we live. If — if we just have to live in one room together, why, you come too, Aramanth, with us, and still be my nurse.”

Aramanth was boo-hooing, as she said afterward, which means that she was “’aving a great henjoyment of a cry” as James explained (James was the one who put his *h*’s in the wrong places and left them out of the right ones). She heard the kind little voice, and she knew someway that it was all unnecessary, but the love went into her heart forever, and she felt that the years spent with this little girl had been very dear and sweet ones. Her answer was very sweet also.

“Even if your ma was a beggar, dear Miss Rosie, you would still have a nurse while I was livin’.” She meant it, dear girl, every word, and

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Roselle believed it also, for they had both been poor children until lately, only in a different way, but just then the Duchess could stand no more of it.

She came forward and did not separate them, only laid a hand around each neck and really pressed them closer.

“I want you to forgive my listening,” she told them; “you did not hear me, so I was too polite to come in. I want to tell you about my money first of all. You see a thousand dollars is a great deal of money, but we still have a little left. We can still have James and John and the Cook, and the carriage, and you, dear Aramanth, and chocolates, but there are two things we have to do really, and I may as well tell you both right now what they are.”

They were all grouped close, close together, true and loving as you please. "One thing," continued the beautiful Duchess, "is for Roselle and me to live in one room, and another thing is that I am going to send Roselle to the public school."

The little girl sprang away from her dear nurse-girl, and looked into the Duchess's face.

"You are not doing that because we are poor, but because I asked you," she cried gratefully to the Duchess, but the Duchess only smiled, holding a hand of each of them.

"Indeed, not at all," she answered. "I am going to send you to the public school, so you will learn how much money is a thousand dollars and I have a great mind to send Aramanth too. You and Aramanth are quite disgraceful in

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arithmetic, and I really think I shall have to teach you myself if you don't do better. When I was young, little girls really used to learn multiplication tables before they studied French."

Then she went out of the room and left them together to talk over the wonderful happenings, as she knew they would like to, and they did too, only Cookie came in also; and very jolly were they all until Frances came to the door, saying, —

"Miss Rosie, the Missus wants to see you. She has found a poor child for you at last."

XIV

THE POOR CHILD

IT seemed the very sweetest thing that could have happened just at that moment, but when Roselle went into the library where Frances said her mother was waiting, the child was not there at all; probably it was that she had not come yet.

The Duchess sat in her very plain dress in a great chair, and she held out her hands as Roselle came to her. The little girl did not hesitate this time, but climbed into her mother's lap and leaned her head against her mother's shoulder. Then they just sat that way, holding hands, but after a while the Duchess said to her, —

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“Did Frances tell you I had found a poor child at last, dearie?” and Roselle answered, “Yes.” Then the Duchess asked another question: “Are you glad that I found the child, my dear?”

Little Roselle nestled close to her. “Jus’ to-day I want to love you, Mamma,” she said, “but after to-morrow I should love to play with the poor child you got for me. To-day she can have all my toys.”

“You see,” the Duchess explained at this point, “she is a poor child I knew when I was little, only now she is grown.”

The little girl sat in her lap and stared, trying to understand it. Before the Duchess was very far along in her story, she knew that it was not the tale of some ragged little Arab,



but the life of the beautiful Duchess herself.

“There was once a little girl,” the Duchess began, “and I think her name was Mary.” (They both looked more serious at this part of the story, for Mary was the Duchess’s name.)

“She was a very little girl when I first knew her. And rather a lonely little girl, too. She had no father, mother, or brother, but God gave her a little sister to make up for everything else. They were very, very poor children, and often did not have enough to eat, nor any blanket to keep the cold from them. No one was very kind to them, because they lived with very cruel people who often beat the little children, so many nights they went to bed crying, with no kind kiss on each little face.”

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The Duchess straightened up all at once, as if she did not like to think of it, then she went on.

“Well, the little sisters grew up together. It does not matter if the long day holds sorrow for us, so long as we have such love and tenderness at night, for they did love each other. I used to know Mary very well, so God (who does not like vain little children) will forgive me for saying, after all this time, that Mary was very beautiful. The little sister did not have such a beautiful face, but she made up for it by her disposition. When people were rough or unkind to her, she only raised her little face and looked at them, never crying or answering back, as Mary did too often. She was a very good little girl indeed, sweet and gentle; and as Mary had no one else to love,

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you can imagine how much she thought of her little sister. Well, they had no mother, as I say, no one to want to keep them home, or to keep them together, so one day a lady came to the house where they stayed.

“She had just lost her little daughter, and she wanted another child to come and play in her lonely house just as her own little girl had done. She was not a bad-hearted lady, but she had never had a little sister, and maybe she did not know how Mary and the little one had become the whole world to each other.

“Mary was the one she chose. She looked at the face, not the heart, little Roselle, so they left the younger child behind; and to this day,” said the Duchess, “I can hear her voice, and her three little words that she repeated

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over and over, 'Stay wif me ; stay wif me ; stay wif me.'

" Maybe the lady did not know. She separated the little sisters, leaving the poor little crying baby, and taking the little Mary with her to play in the great empty house that the little dead daughter had left ; but Mary was not happy, and she began to hate the lady for her not being happy. She was never beaten in those days and she did not have to run any errands, and she always had enough to eat, but her heart had been left in the old place. She was not a good child, perhaps, but it was only love that she wanted, so after she had been gone some time she made up her mind to run away.

" She did not feel badly to leave the lady who had been so kind to her. She only wanted to find once more the little

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loving child she had left. Indeed, all the way back to the city where the little sister lived, she thought over their meeting, and how the glad light would grow in their sad eyes, and how she would give the baby sister her own silver breastpin to make up for the past.

“She was tired and half sick when she reached the old house. It was nearly night, but she knocked at the door. She had been afraid of what the cross woman who lived there would say to her ; but when the door was opened, they took her in and stared at her, and said nothing, so she ran through the rooms crying. Then they told her that the little sister was dead, that she had sickened and pined away and died, never knowing that Mary still loved her, and had wanted to be with her all the time.

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"That is all," ended the Duchess, "of that part of my story. Sometime perhaps in Heaven the two little sisters will meet again and understand.

"Mary did not die. She was strong and young and healthy, but she never loved any one again, although when she grew up to be a woman a kind and good man asked her hand in marriage, just as the princes ask the ladies in fairy tales. So she was very, very happy for several years, then the good man died and everybody was sorry for it, but Mary was sorriest of all. I have the man's picture on my mantel, and some day I want to tell you about him, because he was your father, my dear." This seemed to be the end of the Duchess's story. She held both of Roselle's hands and finished prettily.

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“Then just before the good man died, God was very kind to him and to the woman who had been little Mary. He sent them a dear little baby girl, and so that brings us all very close together, for the child’s name was Roselle, after Mary’s little sister, and now you know whose story it was I told you, and what poor child it is I have found for you.” How pretty the Duchess looked! her voice like pretty music. “We are all poor children, dear, more or less; some of us want in one thing and some in another. One child needs love, and one child needs food, and perhaps another little child needs goodness, some one to make her better.” The Duchess kissed her little girl now.

“Sometime when you are older, dear, I will tell you what I need from you, but just now we can live together

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and talk together, and you can play with me just as you would have done with some little sick girl, only I am grown."

Then they leaned back suddenly, very, very happy over the news, or whatever name one wishes to call it.

And Frances went by after a while, and peeped in at them, they sat arm in arm so long, and then Aramant went by to see the poor child also that the Duchess had found for her little girl, and then Cook got excited and went by too, and not a poor child could be seen in that library! So they all went back and asked John about it, because John was the very smartest of all, but this is all the explanation that John could ever make about it, —

"That so far as 'e could see" (or not see, I should think really) "the poor

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child had come and went when nobody was a-looking."

"Why?" Cook asked. John looked at her. He always looked just so long at Cook when she asked trying questions.

"The only way to discover that, is to *find* the poor child," John replied; "and as no one knows who she is, and no one knows where she went, and no one even knew *if* she went, why, 'ow could they do it?"

Was n't that funny, considering Roselle's and the Duchess's secret?

